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Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Second periodic reports of States parties

Algeria*

* The present report is being issued as received, without formal editing. For the initial report submitted by the Government of Algeria, see CEDAW/C/DZA/1; for its consideration by the Committee, see CEDAW/C/SR.406, 407 and 412 and *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/54/38/Rev.1).

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Contents

	Page
Introduction	3
Part One General information	4
1. Territory and population	4
2. General political structure	4
3. General legal framework within which human rights are protected	5
3.1. Human rights machinery	5
3.2 International treaties and the internal legal system	8
4. Information and publicity	8
5. Overall status of women in Algeria	9
Part Two Information on substantive articles of the Convention	11
Article 2: Obligations of States parties	11
Article 3: Appropriate measures	12
Article 4: Temporary special measures to overcome discrimination	14
Article 5: Modification of social and cultural patterns of conduct	16
Article 6: Suppression of the exploitation of women	19
Article 7: Equality in the political and public life of the country	20
Article 8: Equality in international political life	23
Article 9: Equality of rights to nationality	23
Article 10: Equality in education	24
Article 11: Equality in labour and employment	37
Article 12: Equal access to health services	47
Article 13: Social services and recreational activities	58
Article 14: Rural women	59
Article 15: Equality in legal and civil matters	62
Article 16: Equality of rights within the family	63

Introduction

Algeria ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on 22 January 1996 (Decree No. 96-51). In introducing the initial report (CEDAW/C/DZA/1) on 21 and 26 January 1999, the Algerian delegation stated that, despite the difficult situation facing the country, Algeria had been eager to submit this report only two years after its accession to the Convention, as an indication of the Government's sincere commitment to the defence of human rights, particularly women's rights as defined in the Convention. In its introduction, the delegation described the programme of political and economic reforms launched since the adoption of the 23 February 1989 Constitution in order to put in place new institutions based on political pluralism, separation of powers, independence of the judiciary, freedom of expression and liberalization towards a market economy. It also emphasized that, internationally, the Algerian authorities had sought to speed up the process of accession to the various international human rights instruments.

Since the submission of the initial report, the Algerian authorities have continued in their efforts to consolidate the rule of law, multiparty democracy and the promotion and protection of human rights, despite the constraints imposed by terrorist crime. New institutions were established following the constitutional revision of 28 November 1996, the existing human rights machinery was strengthened and many aspects of economic, social and cultural legislation were brought into line with the new situation. The Act on Civil Harmony adopted by the two houses of Parliament was approved by 98.63 per cent of those who voted in the 16 September 1999 referendum. As part of this process of consolidating the rule of law and strengthening democracy, a far-reaching reform of the judicial and educational systems and of the structures and functions of the State has been entrusted to national commissions composed of professionals and independent personalities whose recommendations subsequently guide government action. Lastly, the associative movement, which has been given increasing encouragement, continues to grow.

The present periodic report, submitted pursuant to article 18 of the Convention, reviews the various measures taken by the public authorities to strengthen women's rights in Algeria. Its purpose is to give the Committee an overview of the real situation of Algerian women and of the practical steps taken since the Convention's entry into force. A number of ministerial departments and institutions participated in its preparation.

In accordance with the Committee's guidelines, this report is divided into two parts. Part One, entitled "General information", describes the country's general political structure and the framework within which efforts are being made to combat discrimination against women. Part Two contains information on substantive articles of the Convention with respect to which changes have been made since the initial report was drafted.

Part One
General information

Since gaining its independence in 1962, Algeria has worked to establish a State based on popular participation and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. All Constitutions since Algeria's independence have embodied universal human rights principles. It was after opening up to a multiparty system in 1989, however, that Algeria speeded up the process of acceding to international human rights instruments. Since then, it has been submitting the reports required under those international commitments.

1. Territory and population

Area: 2,380,000 km^2; **population**: 31.04 million as at 1 January 2002, of whom 15,334,946 are women. The population has tripled since Algeria's independence; **income per capita**: US$ 1,630 (2001); **external debt**: US$ 22,571 billion (2001); **unemployment rate**: 28.9 per cent; **official language**: Arabic; **national languages**: Arabic, Tamazight; **official religion**: Islam; **life expectancy**: total: 71.5 years, **men**: 70.03 years, **women**: 72.8 years; **infant mortality rate** (2000): **boys**: 54.2 per 1,000, **girls**: 47.8 per 1,000, **total**: 51.1 per 1,000; **maternal mortality rate**: 117 maternal deaths per 100,000 births; **total fertility rate**: 2.54 (2000); **children aged under five**: 32 per cent (2000); **young people aged 15 to 24**: 23 per cent; **adults aged 25 to 59**: 38 per cent; **persons aged 60 and over**: 7 per cent; **rural population**: 12,943,686 (41.7 per cent); **urban population**: 18,096,326 (58.3 per cent).

2. General political structure

Upon gaining its independence, Algeria faced many challenges: the return of refugees; the care and support of beneficiaries of victims of the war of national liberation; national reconstruction in all its aspects; and the creation of State structures. To cope with these challenges, the young nation had to design and establish new institutions and ensure their immediate effectiveness. This recovery effort made it possible to provide compulsory schooling for all, free health care and a policy of full employment.

Starting in 1988, Algeria faced the imperative of consolidating the rule of law and making a transition on two levels (political democratization and economic liberalization). As elsewhere, this process of change has not been without problems. The building of a modern State that is democratic in its functioning and transparent in its management of public affairs has been hampered by internal constraints linked to the one-party culture and by economic and social constraints.

The political reforms undertaken by the authorities since that date led, after a long process of dialogue with all the political parties that respected the Constitution and laws of the Republic, to the establishment of institutions elected by universal suffrage. The adoption by referendum of a revised Constitution on 28 November 1996 also strengthened basic freedoms, political pluralism, separation of powers and independence of the judiciary.

In addition to the Constitution, three basic texts have contributed to the democratization of public life in Algeria today:

(a) The Political Parties Act, adopted in 1989 and amended in 1997,which enabled over 60 new political parties to emerge on the political scene. A subsequent streamlining brought the number of political parties down to its current figure of 28;

(b) The Associations Act, promulgated in 1988 and amended in 1990, provides that associations may be created simply by declaration of the founders, made either to the **wilaya** (prefecture) or to the Ministry of the Interior (in the case of a national association). There are nearly 50,000 associations active in Algeria today; some, such as associations for the defence and promotion of women's rights, demand State approval;

(c) The Information Act, adopted in 1990, which paved the way for an independent or party-affiliated press alongside the State press.

The first multiparty presidential elections were held on 16 November 1995. They were followed by early presidential elections on 15 April 1999. The President can be re-elected only once. He holds the highest public office in the country, subject to the limits set by the Constitution, and appoints the head of Government, who in turn draws up his programme and submits it to the National People's Assembly for approval.

Legislative power is exercised by Parliament, which consists of two houses: the National People's Assembly and the Council of the Nation (Senate). It monitors action by the Government and enacts laws. Following the 15 May 2002 legislative elections, the National People's Assembly has 389 deputies (of whom 24 are women), comprising members of nine political parties and 30 independents. Under the previous legislature elected on 5 June 1997, the Assembly had 380 deputies, comprising members of 10 political parties and 11 independents. The Council of the Nation, established in December 1997, has 144 seats. Two thirds of its members are elected by an electoral college composed of members of the communal and departmental people's assemblies and the remaining third, or 48 members, are appointed by the President of the Republic.

The principle of independence of the judiciary is embodied in article 138 of the Constitution.

3. General legal framework within which human rights are protected

3.1 Human rights machinery

Most of the early warning and monitoring machinery in the area of human rights in Algeria is now in place. It covers both individual (civil and political) and collective (economic, social and cultural) rights. It comprises four main categories of interrelated mechanisms.

(a) Political machinery

This is centred in Parliament, which, with its two houses — the National People's Assembly and the Council of the Nation — is both the institutional expression of the democratic dimension of the Algerian State and a fitting forum for the free and pluralistic expression of citizens' concerns. Human rights questions are

at the forefront of parliamentary debates and are dealt with by permanent commissions established to that end by both houses.

Political parties are considered by law to be a constituent element of the machinery for the promotion of human rights. The Political Parties Act of 8 July 1989, as amended in March 1997, requires party statutes and programmes expressly to include the safeguarding of individual rights and fundamental freedoms among their objectives. Article 3 of the Act provides as follows:

"In all their activities, political parties are required to conform to the following principles and objectives:

- Respect for individual and collective freedoms and for human rights;
- Commitment to democracy and respect for national values;
- Acceptance of political pluralism;
- Respect for the democratic and republican nature of the State".

(b) Judicial machinery

The Algerian State has set up judicial machinery to guarantee citizens' rights and provide the judiciary with decision-making autonomy. To that end, the judiciary in Algeria is composed as follows: (a) the **daïra** (sub-prefecture level) courts; the **wilaya** (departmental level) courts; and the Supreme Court at the national level.

Article 152 of the Constitution also provides for a Council of State, to serve as the body regulating the activity of the administrative courts. It was established on 17 June 1998 and is composed of 44 members.

Lastly, Parliament has adopted a law establishing a court responsible for settling conflicts of jurisdiction between the Supreme Court and the Council of State, in accordance with article 152 of the Constitution.

(c) Freedom of the press

The law considers the rights to information and to freedom of the press to be essential machinery for the monitoring and protection of individual rights. In this regard, the remarkable development of the press in Algeria has given it real leverage in the collective protection of human rights. There are currently 32 daily newspapers in existence (as compared with 25 when the previous report was submitted), 6 belonging to the State sector (8 at the time of the previous report) and 26 belonging to the private or political party sector (17 at the time of the previous report). Their circulation averages a total of 1.5 million copies per day. There are 43 weekly periodicals, with an average circulation of 1.4 million copies per week. Twenty other bimonthly or monthly periodicals have a total circulation of 300,000 copies per month. The reading public is estimated at 9 million people per week.

Contrary to certain media reports, no Algerian journalist has been convicted of a crime of opinion. The only cases reported involve actions for defamation or dissemination of false information. Lastly, cases of non-publication of certain national newspapers have generally been due to commercial disputes with their printers or to bankruptcy, as is the case in other countries.

As international organizations themselves have acknowledged, the Algerian press is one of the freest in the third world. The International Federation of Journalists, whose executive board includes Algeria, is accredited in Algeria; its North Africa office is located in Algiers.

Since the completion of the institutional process which gave Algeria all the legal instruments needed for the democratic functioning of a State subject to the rule of law, no legal proceedings have been taken against any newspaper, despite the fact that situations involving "repeated defamation and insults" involving certain newspapers fully justified recourse to the system of justice to obtain redress. It should be noted in this context that the restrictions imposed at one time on dealing with security information have been lifted.

Foreign journalists regularly receive accreditation in Algeria. Such accreditation is granted under a specific mechanism in order to process applications more flexibly and rapidly. An indication of Algeria's accessibility to foreign journalists is the fact that 1,200 foreign journalists visited the country in 1997, 626 in 1998, 839 in 1999, 706 in 2000, 654 in 2001 and 593 up to 30 September 2002.

The negative and occasionally tendentious articles by some of these journalists have not prevented their authors from making repeated visits to the country.

(d) Associations and trade unions

The associative movement has grown considerably since 1988. At the national level, there are currently nearly 50,000 associations active in various fields. The Algerian Constitution gives a prominent place to freedom of association for the defence of human rights. Article 32 guarantees the individual or collective defence of these rights and article 41 defines their scope: freedom of expression, association and assembly. Freedom of association naturally includes the political sphere, but has also found expression in the protection of certain categories of rights: the rights of women, children, the sick, the disabled, consumers and users of public services. The authorities encourage associations by granting them various subsidies and facilities.

Most associations now have a statute, a basis and an activity that enable them to join networks of international associations. Associations involved in the promotion of women's rights, education or literacy campaigns are particularly active.

Trade union freedom was reaffirmed in the Constitution and given organizational expression in the Act of 21 December 1991. More detailed information is found in Part Two of this report (under article 8).

(e) Other machinery for the protection and promotion of human rights

On 9 October 2001, the President of the Republic formally established the National Advisory Committee on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, **composed of 45 members, including 13 women**. Its composition and the appointment of its members are based on the principle of sociological and institutional pluralism.

Created by Presidential Decree No. 01-71 of 25 March 2001, the Committee is "an independent institution under the aegis of the President of the Republic and a guarantor of the Constitution, the fundamental rights of citizens and public freedoms".

This national institution is also an advisory body responsible for monitoring, early warning and evaluation in the area of respect for human rights. Its task is to examine situations of human rights violations that have been observed or brought to its attention and to take all appropriate action in that regard. It is also responsible for conducting any awareness-raising, information and outreach activities for the promotion of human rights; for promoting human rights research, education and teaching; and for advising on ways to improve national legislation. Lastly, it produces an annual report on the state of human rights in the country, which it submits to the President of the Republic.

This new institution replaces the National Human Rights Observatory, which was dissolved by the Presidential Decree that created it. It has also taken on mediation activities formerly carried out by the National Mediator.

3.2 International treaties and the internal legal system

Algeria's international commitments take precedence over domestic law. In a decision dated 20 August 1989, the Constitutional Council reaffirmed the constitutional principle that international treaties ratified by Algeria take precedence over domestic law. That decision states that, after its ratification and as soon as it is published, any convention becomes part of domestic law and, pursuant to article 132 of the Constitution, acquires an authority higher than that of the law, allowing any Algerian citizen to invoke it before the courts. Individuals who have exhausted all available domestic remedies thus have access to the safeguard mechanisms established by the Human Rights Committee or the Committee against Torture.

The Algerian authorities, the National Advisory Committee on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, associations and the media attach great importance to these possibilities of recourse to international machinery. In practice, Algerian citizens and their lawyers appear to be satisfied with the many existing domestic remedies (courts, National Advisory Committee).

4. Information and publicity

Algeria's ratification of the international human rights instruments was publicized widely by the national media when those instruments were submitted for consideration and adoption by the National Assembly. All the instruments thus ratified were published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Algeria.

In additional to the symposia and seminars held regularly on this topic, the annual celebration of Human Rights Day on 10 December provides a further opportunity to publicize the various international human rights instruments to which Algeria has acceded. Likewise, 8 March and 1 June provide regular opportunities to reaffirm the place and role of women and children in society.

The "Public Freedoms" module which used to be taught in university law schools has been reintroduced, with an updated syllabus that takes account of international developments and recent accessions. Some universities (Oran, Tizi Ouzou and Annaba, for example) have already created specific modules. Human rights are also taught to students at the National College of Magistrates, the National Police Academy and the National School of Prison Administration.

A UNESCO Chair in Human Rights has been established at Oran University. Inaugurated in December 1995, it is responsible for organizing and promoting an integrated system of human rights research, training, information and documentation. Preparations are under way to establish a master's degree in human rights. One-day workshops on human rights and humanitarian law are held regularly and their work has been published. The National Human Rights Observatory used to publicize the human rights principles contained in national legislation and in the international instruments to which Algeria has acceded. Its outreach work takes the form of the publication of journals and the organization and sponsorship of seminars, exhibitions and one-day workshops with associations.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, Algeria has been in a period of transition at two levels: to a pluralist democracy and to a market economy. This complex transition has encountered some problems, attributable mainly to the state of the national economy and to the unfavourable international economic situation. These economic problems have provided fertile ground for political dissent, which some forces have attempted to use in order to oppose the process of change in the country, including by resorting to terrorist acts. It was to deal with this situation that the Algerian authorities decided to declare a state of emergency in February 1992. Although it imposed some restrictions on the exercise of public rights and freedoms, the state of emergency did not suspend the State's obligations to guarantee the exercise of the fundamental freedoms of the citizen embodied in the internal constitutional order and in the international conventions ratified by Algeria. Moreover, in acting to preserve public order and protect persons and property threatened by terrorism, the authorities have always operated in accordance with the law and with their international treaty obligations. The purpose of such action is to strengthen the rule of law and create the conditions for legitimization of the country's institutions through a return to genuinely free, pluralist and democratic elections, such as those that took place in Algeria in 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999 and 2002.

5. Overall status of women in Algeria

The overall status of Algerian women since 1962 must be viewed in the context of the country's political, economic, cultural and social evolution.

As in all Arab-Muslim societies, the legal status of women in Algeria presents a dichotomy. The constitutional principle of equality of the sexes is scrupulously respected when it comes to civil and political rights: women have full status as citizens. Questions of personal status are governed by the Family Code, which is supposedly based on the Shariah.

There are no legal provisions in either civil law or criminal law that discriminate between women and men in Algeria. Like men, women have full legal capacity and can use that capacity freely pursuant to article 40 of the Civil Code, as explained in Part Two of this report. They have the right to acquire, administer, use and dispose of any property and the right to sign contracts and commercial documents. They retain these rights upon marriage, their personal property and the income from their work remaining entirely at their disposal. No provision of criminal law discriminates against women in relation to men; on the contrary, some penalties are reduced.

In matters of personal status, the 1984 Family Code reflects the dichotomy noted above. The provisions with which public opinion and experts take greatest issue are found in several articles, including those on the marital home in the event of divorce, polygamy, the woman's legal guardian in matters of marriage, dowry, etc.

These apparent contradictions should be neither minimized nor exaggerated in terms of their practical effect. They must be viewed in the light of another very important element, namely, the place and role of Islamic law in shaping legislation and case law in Algeria. Not only are this place and this role extremely limited, but the sophistication of present-day problems arising from the interpenetration of diverse cultural practices has created a paradox whereby the growing secularization of various areas of cultural, social, political and economic life has prompted a desire to take a fresh look at the Family Code in the light of an historical and historicized interpretation of the Shariah and the Islamic law on which the Code's provisions are supposedly based.

The evolution of Algerian society and the authorities' efforts to further emancipate Algerian women are bound to bring about progress in this regard. To this end, an executive organ, the Ministry for the Family and the Status of Women, was created in June 2002 primarily to complete the process of Algerian women's emancipation.

Algeria's ratification of the Convention forms part of this policy of gradual emancipation. Ratification aroused strong and conflicting reactions among Algerian public opinion, with opposition coming both from conservative circles and from those that favoured greater emancipation for women. The Government's position was to accede to the Convention with some reservations (which, it should be noted, do not question the essence of the Convention), on the implicit understanding that accession to this and other similar instruments should be used as an argument for gradual social and legislative change and that those reservations would be withdrawn as such change progressed. Accession prompted the Government to envisage amendments to the Family Code.

Accordingly, a multidisciplinary working group composed of experts in the relevant legal areas was set up to review the Family Code, away from ideological pressures and interpretations. Besides, such pressures and interpretations had every opportunity to make themselves felt through the various avenues of public expression that have become a daily reality in Algeria.

In the political sphere, Algerian women's involvement in the national liberation struggle naturally led them to take an active part in the country's reconstruction. The authorities, for their part, have never enacted any legislation that might be considered discriminatory against women. On the contrary, despite the shifting nature of political events in Algeria, the overall situation of women has improved appreciably.

On the economic front, the constraints brought about by the transition to a market economy have adversely affected the social situation of the population in general and women in particular, as a result of a number of factors that will be discussed in Part Two of this report.

Women's rights and the recognition of their role in the country's political, economic and social life were embodied in various Algerian laws long before Algeria acceded to the Convention. However, it should be noted that this recent accession has served, and will serve, to encourage the authorities and associations to take specific measures to enhance the status of women.

Part Two
Information on substantive articles of the Convention

Article 2: Obligations of States parties

Since Algeria gained its independence, the principle of non-discrimination among citizens has been scrupulously respected by the legislature. This is facilitated by the fact that, traditionally, discriminatory practices have been unknown in Algerian society.

Women's rights are guaranteed first and foremost by the provisions of the Constitution guaranteeing the equality of all citizens.

As stated in its preamble, the Constitution is paramount and is the fundamental law that guarantees individual and collective rights and freedoms. Its purpose is to provide legal protection and control the actions of the authorities in a society in which the rule of law and human progress in all its dimensions prevail.

The Constitution devotes several articles to fundamental rights and freedoms:

Article 29: "Citizens are equal before the law, without any discrimination based on birth, race, sex, opinion or any other personal or social condition or circumstance".

Article 31: "The purpose of institutions is to ensure the equality of all citizens under the law by removing the obstacles that hinder human progress and prevent the effective participation of all in political, economic, social and cultural life".

Article 34 guarantees the inviolability of the human person and prohibits any form of physical or psychological violence. It is supplemented by article 35, which condemns violations of rights and freedoms and physical or psychological attacks on the integrity of the human person.

Article 140 states that justice is founded on the principles of legality and equality. It is equal for all, accessible to all and is expressed by respect for the law.

Starting from these constitutional principles, Algerian law ensures that in no area of life is any distinction made between men and women, who thus enjoy complete equality of rights and duties.

The Civil Code, the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Electoral Code and the various special codes (commerce, information, health, customs, etc.) are based on the principle of the equality of all citizens. None of their provisions has been deemed by the Constitutional Council to be contrary to the spirit or the letter of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It should be recalled that the Council is responsible, inter alia, for monitoring the conformity of laws with the Constitution and with the international conventions signed by Algeria, for censuring any violation of the principle of equality of all citizens and for verifying that the laws and regulations applied to foreign nationals are compatible with the Convention and with the international conventions ratified by Algeria.

With respect to the adoption of legislative measures prohibiting all discrimination against women, the principle of equality of men and women is in itself sufficient, since any law that is not consistent with it may be declared null and void by the Constitutional Council.

Article 3: Appropriate measures

Upon gaining its independence, Algeria took measures giving women, on a basis of equality with men, access to education, employment and training so that they could, inter alia, acquire the necessary skills to enter the labour force.

Provisions were incorporated in laws and regulations to promote equal treatment of citizens without distinction based on gender. The law also guarantees equal access to work, remuneration and promotion, as will be illustrated below with statistics. These measures have resulted in significant progress for women in various fields of activity.

The principle of equality of the sexes is embodied in articles 29, 31, 33, 34, 36 and 51 of the Constitution. It should be noted in this connection that women, like men:

(i) Have access to all categories of public office;

(ii) Have the right to vote and thereby to approve candidates for elected office;

(iii) Are eligible to run for office in all elections, including presidential elections;

(iv) May found a party, association or trade union and lead or represent it;

(v) May express their opinions freely through all channels;

(vi) May hold meetings and demonstrations;

(vii) Have access to the courts and to any other tribunal;

(viii) May choose their place of residence and travel freely within the country and abroad;

(ix) Enjoy all the social benefits provided by law;

(x) Have access to primary, intermediate, secondary and higher education;

(xi) Benefit from vocational training courses in all branches of activity, including those deemed to be a male preserve;

(xii) Have access to preventive health care and treatment;

(xiii) May conclude all kinds of contracts;

(xiv) May obtain loans or any similar types of advances provided for by law. The legislation governing the granting of bank loans and mortgages does not discriminate in any way;

(xv) Have access to employment and career development and promotion guarantees;

(xvi) Receive the same remuneration and statutory leave and retirement benefits.

Non-discrimination may be observed by looking at three key sectors: education, justice and health services:

(a) Education. Girls now account for between 45 and 48 per cent of students in primary, intermediate, secondary and university education. In addition, women account for 43 per cent of teachers in primary education (82 per cent in the country's five largest cities: Algiers, Oran, Constantine, Annaba and Sétif); 45 per cent in intermediate education (71 per cent in the five largest cities); and 33 per cent in secondary education (61 per cent in the five largest cities). In the long run, legislative change, whatever its pace, will unquestionably follow this trend.

(b) Justice: Of a total of 2,510 judges, 667, or 26.57 per cent, are women. Of the 34 judges that make up the Council of State established in June 1998, 16 are women. Lastly, in the competitive examinations for admission to the judiciary in recent years, the 200 successful candidates have included, on average, 110 women. This trend reflects the principle of non-discrimination between men and women.

(c) Health services: Statistics reveal an increasing feminization of the medical and pharmaceutical professions. In 1996, the proportion of women in these professions was estimated at 51 per cent. Among doctors, women accounted for 36 per cent of university hospital doctors, 46.7 per cent of specialists and 48.6 per cent of general practitioners. The proportions increased to 64.4 per cent for dental surgeons and 65.4 per cent for pharmacists.

Married women who work enjoy the status of social security contributors by virtue of their contributions. Their marital status has no effect on their social security entitlements. Moreover, there is no statutory provision that would prevent a married woman from working. Article 17 of Labour Relations Act No. 90-11 of 21 February 1990 prohibits all discrimination related to a woman's marital status. What is more, certain facilities are accorded to married women, such as the option of taking leave of absence to raise a child under the age of five or to look after a disabled child.

With regard to recruitment, it should be noted that the law guarantees equal access to employment without distinction on grounds of sex. For example, civil service recruitment figures for 1996 and 1997 show a marked predominance of women, who account for 65 and 58 per cent, respectively, of the total. It should be recalled that women do not require their husband's permission to take up gainful employment. Women and men are required to produce the same documents for the relevant administrative file.

The law guarantees equal pay and this provision is rigorously enforced in both the public and the private sector. Compliance is verified by the Labour Inspectorate.

With regard to measures taken recently by the authorities, since the entry into force of the Convention and in the context of promoting a comprehensive women's policy, the following action should be mentioned:

(a) The creation of a Ministry for the Family and the Status of Women, the culmination of efforts by all social forces both within the Government and within civil society.

In the preamble to its programme of action, the Ministry states that women have "an innate status of moral authority within the family in their respective roles as mothers, daughters, sisters and wives, but also as citizens of a nation State which they helped build in pain and pride".

The Ministry, the first such structure to be set up in Algeria since independence, rejects pessimistic assessments of the status of women and the family, invoking the social mobility that has propelled Algerian women into the process of individualization and integration in nation-building alongside other social categories that have benefited from the same process.

Basing itself on social praxis in all its diversity and vitality and drawing on a wealth of accumulated experience, the Ministry focuses its programme of action on six main areas:

- Women and legislation;
- Women, the family and the economy;
- Women, the family and education;
- Women, the family and culture;
- Women and information;
- Women and international relations.

It should be emphasized that in the "Women, the family and the economy" area, the Ministry, backed by the existing egalitarian legal arsenal, is devoting serious attention to the concept of gender and development, working closely with other concerned Ministries and the United Nations agencies present in Algeria in this context.

(b) The appointment of **five** women to the post of Minister in important sectors (finance, scientific research, family and the status of women, communication and Algerian community abroad).

Article 4: Temporary special measures to overcome discrimination

Algerian labour law is based on the 1989 Constitution, as revised in 1996, article 29 of which establishes the fundamental principle of the equality of all citizens before the law, without any discrimination based on birth, race, sex, opinion or any other personal or social condition or circumstance.

With regard to work and working conditions, articles 55, 56 and 57 of the Constitution also establish the following:

- Citizens' equality and right to protection, safety and health in the workplace;
- The right to rest;
- The right to organize;
- The right to strike.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Constitution and to the international conventions ratified by Algeria, including human rights conventions, Algerian labour law guarantees the right to hold a job without discrimination, on the basis of

ability and merit, and stipulates that workers are entitled to equal pay and equal benefits for the same work, provided that their qualifications and output are the same. It also recalls the fundamental rights of workers, such as: the right to negotiate, the right to organize, social security, retirement, health, safety, protection from occupational hazards, and health care in the workplace. Special measures for the protection of women have also been introduced in conjunction with maternity and women's role in the family.

All these principles are enforced in public and private-sector companies through company or sectoral collective bargaining agreements, the legality of which is monitored by the Labour Inspectorate.

The only exception is that contained in Labour Relations Act No. 90-11, which differentiates between men and women workers by prohibiting night work for women without special permission from the Labour Inspectorate.

This exception, which exists in the legislation of many other countries, including European countries, is based on the need to protect the health of women and the family, particularly children.

Thus, Algerian law contains special provisions for working women which may be considered a form of positive discrimination.

The most recent provisions designed to protect women from any physical or psychological violence came from the Office of the President of the Republic, which informed the Minister for the Family and the Status of Women, through the Head of Government, of the need to establish an office to receive and follow up complaints of violence against and harassment of women in managerial posts. Building on this initial measure, the Ministry plans to raise public awareness of the issue, mobilizing these same women, who, through their professional experience and their privileged position in the social and economic hierarchy, can serve as intermediaries in the inculcation of ethical values based on standards of respect between the sexes at all levels of Algerian society.

Article 29 of Labour Relations Act No. 90-11 of 21 April 1990 prohibited night work for women unless special permission was given. In addition, article 46 of the Act stipulated that periods of maternity leave are to be considered as periods of time worked.

Other legislative provisions prohibit the employment of women on legal holidays; prohibit the dismissal of a woman worker during the prenatal or postnatal period; and allow working women to take leave in order to accompany a husband whose place of work has changed or to raise a child under the age of five or with an illness requiring care.

Pregnant women benefit from special measures to protect their health and that of their unborn child: protection from exposure to hazardous substances, such as radioactive iodine and X-rays, and exemption from strenuous work, such as heavy lifting.

Women benefit from an earlier retirement age: article 6 of Act No. 83-12 of 1983 sets the retirement age at 60 for men and 55 for women, who also receive a one-year reduction per child, up to a maximum of three years. The Act was amended and supplemented by Ordinance No. 97-13 of 31 May 1997, article 2 of which allows wage earners who have reached the age of 50 and who have contributed to

social security for at least 20 years to retire on a prorated pension. The minimum age and contributory period are reduced by five years for women wage earners.

Article 5: Modification of social and cultural patterns of conduct

There has been some improvement in patterns of social behaviour which encourage women's advancement in all areas and some progress has been made in achieving their full participation in the democratization of education and their complete, non-discriminatory integration into the formal employment sector. However, new barriers to the education of young children in rural areas and on the outskirts of cities have arisen as a result of the doubly devastating effects of the economic crisis and the security situation during the past 10 years. This has led to the rise of informal economic activities among Algerian families and to an increase in the number of women heads of household. The authorities, challenged to develop a streamlined and integrated approach to this new social category, have created funding agencies for the small and medium-sized enterprises which play a major role in its integrated development strategy, particularly as it affects young men and women. The political will exists to expand these programmes to include illiterate and/or rural women heads of household.

The duty to protect women from violence derives from the provisions of the Constitution which guarantee protection for all citizens.

Article 24 of the Constitution provides that "the State is responsible for the safety of persons and property", while article 34 guarantees the inviolability of the human person and prohibits all forms of physical or psychological violence or indignity. This provision is supplemented by article 35, which states that "violations of rights and freedoms and attacks on the physical or psychological integrity of the human person are punishable by law".

Article 65 states that "the law recognizes the duty of parents to educate and protect their children".

A number of articles of the Criminal Code deal with acts of wilful violence, which carries the appropriate penalties (arts. 264-267). Specific provisions establish the penalties for violence against children, including deliberate withholding of food or care in such a way as to jeopardize their health (arts. 269-272). The penalties range from 3 to 20 years' imprisonment, depending on the consequences of the offence; in cases of involuntary manslaughter, the penalty is life imprisonment. However, "where such blows, injuries, violence, assault or deprivation are committed with intent to cause death, the offender shall be punished as for murder, or attempted murder" (art. 271).

This encouraging trend is being temporarily undermined by the problem of terrorism, which affects all categories of people in Algeria, including women, particularly rural women, who are victims of murder, abduction, rape and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

With regard to the measures taken to combat violence against women, it is unfortunately becoming increasingly evident that, as in other countries, the problem has grown; this situation was deplored at a seminar on the medical and legal aspects of all forms of violence against women which was held in late October 2001 under the auspices of the National Institute for Public Health.

The holding of such a seminar is clear proof of the Government's genuine interest in the problem of violence, which affects people of all social classes and ages. The police have provided the following statistics:

During the third trimester of 2001, a survey of 42 **wilaya** (prefectures) found 1,439 women victims of violence, including 1,087 cases of assault, 50 cases of sexual violence, 267 cases of abuse, 4 murder cases and 31 cases of sexual harassment. In 12 per cent of those cases, the offender was the victim's husband; in 1 per cent, the father; in 3 per cent, the brother; in 2 per cent, the son; and in 3 per cent, the partner.

On 29 October 1999, nine months after the initial report of Algeria was submitted, the President of the Republic established a National Commission on Judicial Reform, which he personally entrusted with: studying and evaluating the functioning of the justice system as a public service in all its aspects; identifying possible focal points for interaction with the institutional and social environment, evaluating them and proposing adjustments, as required; and recommending measures to make the justice system more accessible to citizens, improve the effectiveness of legal instruments and procedures and streamline the operations of the courts and prisons.

A document submitted to the President of the Republic on 11 June 2000 makes substantive proposals for a genuine renewal of the justice system to bring it into line with current needs. Many gaps and barriers in Algerian legislation have been identified; some of them constitute violations of the rights and freedoms recognized in the Constitution. **The National Commission on Judicial Reform has therefore recommended that all legislation be reviewed, harmonized and brought into line with the provisions of international instruments.**

To that end, the Minister of State and Justice established two committees in January 2000 to begin the revision of the Civil Code, the Criminal Code, the Code of Civil Procedure and the Code of Criminal Procedure. The offences of harassment, domestic violence and sexual assault and the definition of rape are being considered by the committee entrusted with revising the Criminal Code.

No specific legislation deals with women victims of violence; however, the law stipulates that for all types of injuries, civil compensation shall be awarded at the judge's discretion, whether a man or a woman is involved. This explains the lack of judicial statistics on women victims of violence. We therefore believe that the inclusion of offences related to violence in the revision of the Criminal Code, as recommended by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, would in the medium term institute this practice in the courts so that in the future statistics on women victims would be kept.

However, it must be recognized that in Algeria, as in many other societies, domestic violence is an unacknowledged and taboo subject. Nevertheless, the authorities have taken highly encouraging steps to increase the number of women in fields which until recently were viewed as a male preserve, including police and civil defence work. The purpose of these measures to recruit women into the police force is to improve community outreach and reporting services for women victims in the police stations.

Thus, in each sub-prefecture (**daïra**), there is at least one woman official who greets and provides guidance to women. The goal is to humanize police stations and

encourage women to discuss their problems calmly; women police and security officers are now a visible presence in airports, ports and in the courts.

In urban sub-prefectures there are women who hold the rank of senior officer and commissioner. It must be emphasized that the recruitment of women as representatives of the law and the establishment of community policing have made it possible to deal with this specific category of women victims of abuse by listening to them and providing them with guidance and follow-up until the perpetrators have been brought before the competent courts.

Women employed in the Criminal Investigation Department

Rank	*Total*
Chief of police	1
Police commissioner	21
Senior police officer	217
Police inspector	331
Police lance sergeant	11
Principal police investigator	85
Police sergeant	50
Police investigator	68
Police officer	1 492

Women trainees: Constantine and Ain Benian, police academies

Rank	*Total*
Senior police officer	50
Police inspector	150
Police officer	500
Subtotal for 2002 (police and trainees)	**2 976**
Civilian staff	3 007
Total	**5 983**

As a result of the assignment of traditionally male tasks to women in the civil defence field, the number of women staff has risen to 496, of whom 384 hold posts in the central and local administration; and 5 hold managerial posts. The clear desire of the authorities to incorporate women into the operational sector marks both a break with the past and a qualitative step forward; 112 women doctors have been hired and they participate efficiently in hands-on prevention, treatment and emergency activities. Because of their listening ability, they have proven their effectiveness during the crises which Algeria has experienced in the past few decades and more recently during the floods of 10 November 2001.

Article 6: Suppression of the exploitation of women

There is little traffic in women or exploitation of prostitution of women in Algerian society. Such behaviour is punishable under the Algerian Criminal Code, particularly articles 342, 343, 344 and 345 thereof. Algeria is a party to all the international instruments which prohibit this practice.

The Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, adopted by the General Assembly on 2 December 1949, was ratified by Algeria on 11 September 1963 (Official Gazette No. 66 of 14 September 1963) with a reservation to article 22.

The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, adopted by the General Assembly on 10 December 1984, entered into force on 26 June 1987 and was ratified by Algeria on 16 May 1989 (Official Gazette No. 20 of 17 May 1989).

As a Member of the United Nations, Algeria is also bound by the declarations and resolutions adopted at the sessions of the General Assembly with a view to the elimination of gender inequality and discrimination against and exploitation of women, including Assembly resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993, which, through the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the General Assembly in 1993, encourages Member States to take all necessary measures to eliminate violence against women.

Articles 342 to 349 of the Criminal Code establish severe penalties for all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women. Article 342 establishes a sentence of 5 to 10 years' imprisonment and a fine of 500 to 25,000 dinars for anyone who incites, promotes, aids or abets the debauchery or corruption of minors of either sex under the age of 19 or, where the victim is under the age of 16, for anyone who commits even a single such act. Article 343 prohibits any act which is directly or indirectly related to the exploitation of prostitution; offenders are punishable by two to five years' imprisonment and a fine of 500 to 20,000 dinars. Unless the act in question constitutes a more serious crime, these penalties apply to anyone who knowingly: aids, abets or protects in any manner the prostitution of others or solicitation for purposes of prostitution; in any way shares in the proceeds of prostitution or receives money from a person who habitually engages in prostitution or who derives income from the prostitution of others; cohabits with a person who habitually engages in prostitution; maintains a habitual relationship with one or more persons engaging in prostitution and has no other visible means of support; hires, recruits or maintains an adult, even with the latter's consent, for purposes of prostitution or delivers that person into prostitution or debauchery; in any way acts as intermediary between persons engaged in prostitution or debauchery and those who exploit or pay for the prostitution or debauchery of others; or uses threats, pressure, deception or any other means to frustrate the actions of qualified agencies aimed at prevention, control, assistance or re-education on behalf of persons engaging in or at risk of prostitution. Immoral acts are also punishable offences (arts. 333-335); rape is punishable by 5 to 10 years' imprisonment and the rape of a minor by up to 20 years' imprisonment. The penalty is also increased if the perpetrator is a relative of the victim or is in a position of authority over her (arts. 336 and 337).

Slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour are unknown in Algerian society. Algeria has acceded to various international conventions prohibiting such acts, including the 1949 Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, the 1926 and 1956 Geneva Conventions on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, the 1921 Convention for the Suppression of Trafficking in Women and Children and International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions No. 29 on forced labour (1930) and No. 105 on the abolition of forced labour (1957).

Article 96 of the Civil Code establishes that "a contract shall be null and void if its purpose is contrary to public order and public decency".

It must be acknowledged that poverty remains the primary cause of social marginalization; in almost all societies, poverty makes it difficult for families to meet the needs of their members. Extreme poverty has a negative impact on all aspects of family life and is particularly damaging to vulnerable sectors of society, **where women are the primary victims**.

Lastly, prostitution is not a punishable offence under the Criminal Code, as it is in nearly all countries; it is considered an offence against the dignity of the women and men involved in it, in contrast to the widely held view of prostitution as the world's oldest profession and a necessary evil.

Nevertheless, as noted above, there are severe penalties for anyone who knowingly aids, incites, abets or protects the prostitution of others or solicitation for purposes of prostitution.

Only procurement is a punishable offence under the law.

Article 7: Equality in the political and public life of the country

There is no legislative or regulatory provision that restricts participation by women in the country's political life. The Constitution and Order No. 97-07 of 6 March 1997 setting up the electoral regime guarantee women the right to vote and to be elected. The voting requirements are the same for men and women (art. 5 of the Electoral Act).

Only voters in the following categories may vote by proxy (art. 62):

- Those who are hospitalized or housebound;
- Those who are severely disabled or infirm;
- People who are working away from their **wilaya** of residence and/or travelling, those unable to leave their place of work on polling day and citizens who are temporarily abroad.

It should be pointed out that, prior to the promulgation of Order No. 97-07, husbands and wives were each allowed to vote on behalf of the other by proxy. This clearly cast doubt on whether Algerian women were personally exercising their right to vote.

Under the old system, women were reduced to expressing themselves through guardians, that is, their husbands, who voted for them in accordance with Algerian tradition.

The number of Algerian women in politics and their level of involvement are constantly growing. The authorities encourage women to become more actively involved in politics, either as voters or as candidates in the various elections.

The following statistics illustrate the increased participation of women in local and legislative elections in 2002 as compared with 1997:

Legislative elections (June 1997)

Eleven women from among 322 female candidates were elected to the National People's Assembly to represent their respective political parties.

People's Assemblies (October 1997)

Seventy-five women were elected to the Communal People's Assemblies from among 1,281 female candidates; 62 women were elected to the Departmental People's Assemblies from among 905 female candidates.

Legislative elections (May 2002)

Twenty-seven women were elected from among 694 female candidates. Three were appointed as representatives of the Government, and the other 24 are currently members of the National People's Assembly.

Local People's Assemblies (October 2002)

One hundred forty-seven women were elected to the Communal People's Assemblies from 3,679 female candidates.

One hundred thirteen women were elected to the Departmental People's Assemblies from among 2,684 female candidates.

There are seven women members of the Council of the Nation (Senate).

Women in decision-making posts:

Since 1982, 17 women have held government office as ministers, vice-ministers or secretaries of state.

Since the government reshuffle in June 2002, five women have been appointed to government positions, including a Minister for the Family and the Status of Women. This new governmental structure is exclusively responsible for issues relating to the family and the promotion and safeguarding of women's rights.

Furthermore, significant steps recently taken to make senior positions available to female managers have included appointing women to posts in the executive branch, as head of **wilaya** (prefect) and **daïra** (sub-prefect), and in the judicial branch, as administrator and as president of the division in the Council of State. For the first time since independence two women magistrates have become presiding judges in the higher courts. There are also 34 female presiding judges in the lower courts (out of 56), one female Procurator-General and 137 female examining magistrates (out of 404). **Out of a total of 2,751 magistrates, 846 are women.**

Women are distributed in senior posts throughout the country (north, south, east and west), and in all jurisdictions, rather than simply in the large urban centres such as Oran, Constantine and the capital, Algiers.

Women have also been appointed for the first time to university posts in the faculties of natural science, science and technology and the arts.

In addition, a women was appointed vice-governor of the Bank of Algeria, and another woman was appointed as a member *intuitus personae* of the Bank's Currency and Credit Council. Two women were appointed to the High Islamic Council as Director of Studies and External Relations and Director of Documentation and Information.

At the political level, there are two female party leaders. Nevertheless, while women's participation in all levels of national politics is constantly growing, it remains low. The integration of women into the political parties nonetheless increased during the most recent legislative and local elections.

Women's involvement in civil society has been expressed through the emergence of a women's association movement. Authorized associations in all fields number 441, including 21 operating at the national level. These associations aim to promote women in all areas and encourage their full integration into the country's social and economic development.

Women's participation in Algeria's socio-economic development has been characterized by increased female employment rates in all sectors, particularly in education (including higher education), vocational training and health, where the number of female workers is constantly rising.

In the vocational training sector, the female workforce as at 31 December 2002 was as follows:

1. **In the central administration**: Women number 122 out of 285 officials, or 42 per cent, distributed as follows:

Senior State appointments: 9 out of 47 (19 per cent)

Managerial personnel: 16 out of 42 (38 per cent)

First-line supervisory staff: 53 out of 78 (67 per cent)

Non-management personnel: 44 out of 118 (37 per cent)

2. **At the local level**: There are 3 female directors of vocational training at the **wilaya** level out of 48 (6 per cent). The first one was appointed in 2001 and the other two were appointed in early 2002 (including one in the southern **wilaya** of Illizi).

Heads of vocational training colleges: 59 out of 687 (8 per cent) are women.

Inspectors: 12 out of 90 (13 per cent) are women.

There is a low ratio of women in the latter two professions. This is because women's participation at the local level, in small towns and rural areas, remains limited.

Over the past two years, however, there has been a considerable increase in the number of women working both in the central administration and at the local level as a result of reforms introduced.

Article 8: Equality in international political life

As in other sectors of the civil service, access to the diplomatic corps is open to women and men without discrimination. There is no distinction on the basis of sex in the provisions of Presidential Decree No. 96/442 of 9 December 1996 governing the status of diplomatic and consular officers, in its section on recruitment, training and promotion. Article 17 of that decree provides in fact that:

> "No one may be recruited to any one of the corps instituted by this statute who is not an Algerian citizen; who is not in possession of his/her civil rights or is not of good morals; who cannot meet the level of qualification required for his/her duties and who does not know at least two foreign languages; who does not meet the conditions of age and physical aptitude required to perform his/her duties; who cannot justify his/her position with respect to national service".

The distribution of women among the civil servants of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is as follows:

Total number: 74.

Seventeen women hold senior positions in the Ministry, including four ambassadors.

Participation in international meetings, both bilateral and multilateral, is without discrimination on the basis of sex. Women are regularly appointed as members of Algerian delegations to international negotiations and other gatherings. They are also presented as candidates for elected posts within the United Nations system; two Algerian women have been elected since 2000, one to the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, and the other to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Article 9: Equality of rights to nationality

In accordance with article 30 of the Constitution, "Algerian citizenship is defined by the law". It is in fact determined by Order No. 70-86 of 15 December 1970, establishing the Code of Algerian Nationality, which makes no distinction between men and women with respect to the general conditions for acquisition or loss of nationality. In accordance with articles 6 and 7 of the Order, the following persons are deemed to be Algerians:

A child born of an Algerian father,

A child born of an Algerian mother and an unknown father,

A child born of an Algerian mother and a stateless father,

A child born in Algeria of an Algerian mother and a foreign father who was himself born in Algeria, except where the child repudiates its Algerian nationality within one year before attaining the age of majority.

Article 8 provides that "a child who is an Algerian national by virtue of articles 6 and 7 shall be deemed to have been so from birth, even if the conditions necessary for the attribution of Algerian nationality are not established until some time after its birth". Attribution of the quality of "Algerian national" from birth and the withdrawal or repudiation of this quality by virtue of the provisions of article 6 (3) and article 7 (1) and (2) "does not prejudice the validity of acts entered into by the interested party, nor the rights acquired by third parties on the basis of apparent nationality, formerly possessed by the child".

Article 17 stipulates that "minor children of persons who acquire Algerian nationality become Algerians at the same time as their parents".

Unmarried minor children of a person who has regained nationality, when they are living with that person, recover their Algerian nationality or acquire it by right.

Persons who apply for naturalization must meet certain conditions. They must have resided in Algeria for at least seven years prior to the date of application; they must be resident in Algeria at the time the naturalization decree is signed; they must have attained their majority; they must be of good morals and must not have been sentenced to a penalty involving loss of civil rights; they must have visible means of support; they must be of sound mind and body; and they must demonstrate their assimilation into the Algerian community.

The act of naturalization may grant Algerian nationality to the minor children of a naturalized foreigner. Those children, however, have the right to renounce that nationality between the ages of 18 and 21.

As will be noted, neither marriage to a foreigner nor a husband's change of nationality during marriage can change a woman's nationality, or render her stateless, or oblige her to take the nationality of her husband. The three legal systems countries use to determine nationality are based on blood relations (jus sanguinis), territory (jus soli) or naturalization. Algeria uses the jus sanguinis system.

Article 10: Equality in education

The Algerian State guarantees all children the right to education without distinction as to race, colour, sex or any other factor. This right is also enshrined in the basic instruments of the Republic, including article 53 of the Constitution and Order No. 76-35 of 16 April 1976 (the Education and Training Organization Act). Articles 4 to 7 of the Act establish the right of equal access to education, the compulsory nature of school attendance for children aged 6 to 16, the equality of conditions of access to education and the fact that education is provided free of charge. The decree establishing the compulsory nature of basic education even calls for the imposition of penalties for parents or guardians who fail to comply. The statistical data and indicators for the Algerian educational system provide specific information on the implementation of the various laws and regulations in this area as follows:

1. Number of pupils

School enrolment is growing at an average annual rate of 6.55 per cent; this translates into an average annual increase of 190,000 students, of whom 92,000 are girls.

The table below provides indicators of the growth in enrolment, disaggregated by sex:

Total enrolment

Year	*Total*	*Girls*	*Percentage girls*
1995-1996	7 162 592	3 310 933	46.22
1997-1998	7 587 545	3 624 849	47.77
2000-2001	7 712 182	3 726 603	48.31

The average annual increase in enrolment was 106,238 pupils, of whom 78,479 were girls.

(a) Primary school enrolment

Year	*Total*	*Girls*	*Percentage girls*
1995-1996	4 617 728	2 129 494	46.12
1998-1999	4 778 870	2 229 152	46.65
2000-2001	4 720 950	2 210 114	46.81

Primary-school students accounted for 64.47 per cent of the total school enrolment in 1995-1996, 62.98 per cent in 1998-1999 and 61.21 per cent in 2000-2001.

The enrolment rate for children under 6 is currently nearly 100 per cent.

The average annual increase in the number of primary-school pupils is currently 40,285, of whom 29,914 are girls.

(b) Intermediate school enrolment

Year	*Total*	*Girls*	*Percentage girls*
1995-1996	1 691 561	751 023	44.40
1998-1999	1 898 748	896 262	47.20
2000-2001	2 015 370	968 544	48.05

Intermediate-school pupils accounted for 23.61 per cent of the total school enrolment in 1995-1996, 25.02 per cent in 1998-1999 and 26.13 per cent in 2000-2001.

The average annual increase in the number of intermediate-school pupils is currently 52,000, of whom 24,000 are girls.

(c) Secondary school enrolment

Year	*Total*	*Girls*	*Percentage girls*
1995-1996	853 303	430 416	50.44
1998-1999	909 927	499 435	54.89
2000-2001	974 862	547 945	56.14

Secondary-school students accounted for 11.91 per cent of the total school enrolment in 1995-1996, 12 per cent in 1998-1999 and 12.65 per cent in 2000-2001.

The percentage of girls enrolled in secondary school rose from 50.44 per cent in 1995-1996 to 54.89 per cent in 1998-1999 and to 56.14 per cent in 2000-2001, or more than half of all secondary-school students.

As the above figures show, the Algerian system provides a wholly adequate primary, intermediate and secondary education.

The ratio of girls to boys is practically equal in primary school, while in secondary school, girls outnumber boys.

This major increase in enrolment has required significant investment in both the educational infrastructure and the training and hiring of large numbers of teachers.

2. Teachers

Year	*Total*	*Women*	*Percentage women*
1995-1996	319 407	140 641	44.03
1998-1999	324 147	149 986	46.27
2000-2001	327 284	154 507	47.20

The number of primary-school teachers rose from 169,010, of whom 74,309 were women, in 1995-1996 to 169,549, of whom 77,833 are women, in 1998-1999 and to 169,559, of whom 79,093, or 46.64 per cent, are women, in 2000-2001.

In the intermediate schools, the number of teachers rose from 98,187, of whom 45,852 were women, in 1995-1996 to 100,525, of whom 49,389, or nearly half, were women in 1998-1999; currently, there are 102,137 teachers, of whom 51,150, or 50.07 per cent, are women.

In secondary education, the number of teachers rose from 52,210, of whom 20,480 were women, in 1995-1996 to 54,033, of whom 22,764 were women, in 1998-1999; at present, there are 55,588 teachers, of whom 24,264, or 46.88 per cent, are women.

3. Infrastructure

A significant effort has been made to expand the school system, particularly in rural areas, in order to bring schools closer to families.

The table below shows the number of schools in 1995-1996, 1998-1999 and 2000-2001:

Year	*Primary*	*Intermediate*	*Secondary*	*Total*
1995-1996	15 186	2 921	1 033	19 140
1998-1999	15 507	3 224	1 183	19 914
2000-2001	16 186	3 414	1 266	20 866
Change from 1995-1996 to 1998-1999	321	303	150	774
Change from 1998-1999 to 2000-2001	589	190	83	952

4. Budget

Education has always been one of the State's highest priorities. Approximately 20 per cent of the budget has been allocated to education since the early 1960s. In recent years that percentage has varied between 20 per cent and 30 per cent.

The 1999 education budget was over 128 billion Algerian dinars (nearly $1.8 billion). In 2001, the education budget rose to 191,986,773 dinars, of which 10 million was allocated under the economic recovery programme.

It is important to note that remuneration, which used to represent 97 per cent of the operating budget for education, now represents only 91 per cent and is drawing closer to international norms.

5. Results

(a) Promotion

The final examinations results are as follows:

Promotion rates for pupils at the end of primary school (grade 6)

Year	*Promotion rate*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1995-1996	79.54	77.49	82.10
1998-1999	72.80	68.74	72.80
2000-2001	77.42	73.83	81.64

Promotion rates for pupils a the end of intermediate school (grade 9)

Year	*Promotion rate*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1995-1996	47.31	42.21	53.54
1998-1999	44.53	39.16	50.22
2000-2001	50.64	47.64	53.44

Promotion rates for students at the end of secondary school (baccalaureate)

Year	*Promotion rate*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1995-1996	19.63	18.27	20.93
1998-1999	23.96	22.75	24.89
2000-2001	32.74	32.61	32.83

These figures show that the number of girls who pass the final exams is equal to and even greater than that of boys. However, there are far fewer girls enrolled in technical courses, although these courses are open to both girls and boys and the number of girls enrolled in them is rising.

(b) Repetition and dropout rates

The most recent statistical survey, carried out by the Ministry of Education in 2000-2001, shows that the repetition rate is lower for girls than for boys at all levels of schooling, as seen from the tables below:

Repetition rates at the end of primary school (grade 6)

Year	*Repetition rate*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1995-1996	11.27	14.20	7.60
1998-1999	19.60	23.43	14.97
2000-2001	16.98	20.15	13.26

Dropout rates at the end of primary school (grade 6)

Year	*Dropout rate*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1995-1996	9.19	8.31	10.30
1998-1999	5.93	6.33	5.46
2000-2001	5.60	6.02	5.10

Repetition rates at the end of intermediate school (grade 9)

Year	*Repetition rate*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1995-1996	26.42	29.09	23.17
1998-1999	30.03	32.17	27.77
2000-2001	29.97	30.99	29.01

Dropout rates at the end of intermediate school (grade 9)

Year	*Drop out rate*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1995-1996	26.26	28.70	23.29
1998-1999	25.44	28.66	22.01
2000-2001	19.39	21.37	17.55

Repetition rates at the end of the third year of secondary school

Year	*Repetition rate*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1995-1996	32.70	32.31	33.06
1998-1999	44.59	42.66	46.08
2000-2001	43.42	42.44	44.08

Dropout/dismissal rates at the end of the third year of secondary school

Year	*Dropout rate*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1995-1996	47.68	49.42	46.01
1998-1999	31.46	34.59	29.03
2000-2001	23.84	24.95	23.09

These tables show relatively high repetition and dropout rates. The reasons are many and varied and include economic, social, psychological and pedagogical factors.

The Ministry of Education is aware that this is a major problem and has made school-leaving one of its highest priorities. Urgent measures to reduce this problem will be taken at the beginning of the 2000-2001 academic year. A study is also being carried out (with support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) in order to prepare an analysis of the situation that is as specific as possible in order to deal with it more effectively.

A number of measures designed to encourage children, especially girls, to attend school are already being implemented with a focus on the poorest population groups and regions.

6. Support for keeping children in school (especially girls)

This campaign takes the form of measures to help keep children, especially girls, in school, with a focus on disadvantaged areas. They include:

- **School canteens**: The Government has made a special effort this year by allocating 2 billion dinars to this programme as compared with only 500 million dinars in 2000. The number of beneficiaries has more than doubled, rising from 601,000 in 1998-1999 to 1,050,000 in 2000-2001 and to 1,470,000 in 2001-2002.
- **Boarding schools**: In 2001, 3,585 girls and boys aged 6 to 12 attended such schools. They exist for the benefit of children in the most remote areas, especially the children of desert nomads.

The school canteens and boarding schools for primary-school pupils are completely free of charge.

School construction in very remote areas has brought the schools closer to the inhabitants.

– Day schools and boarding schools at the intermediate level:

Day schools:

Year	*Total*	*Girls*	*Beneficiaries*	*Girls*	*%*	*% Girls*
1995-1996	1 691 561	751 023	91 223	41 620	5.52	5.72
1998-1999	1 898 748	896 262	133 725	65 310	7.04	7.29
2000-2001	2 015 370	968 544	171 384	85 871	8.50	8.87

Boarding schools:

Year	*Total*	*Girls*	*Beneficiaries*	*Girls*	*%*	*% Girls*
1995-1996	1 691 561	751 023	32 249	7 939	1.95	1.09
1998-1999	1 898 748	896 262	33 801	10 075	1.78	1.12
2000-2001	2 015 370	968 544	34 835	12 022	1.73	1.24

– Day schools and boarding schools at the secondary level:

Day schools:

Year	*Total*	*Girls*	*Beneficiaries*	*Girls*	*%*	*% Girls*
1995-1996	853 303	430 416	71 750	38 316	8.41	8.90
1998-1999	909 927	499 435	100 907	56 776	11.09	11.37
2000-2001	975 882	547 945	128 702	73 557	13.19	13.42

Boarding schools:

Year	*Total*	*Girls*	*Beneficiaries*	*Girls*	*%*	*% Girls*
1995-1996	853 303	430 416	51 899	18 123	6.08	4.21
1998-1999	909 927	499 435	54 007	20 905	5.94	4.19
2000-2001	975 882	547 945	55 106	24 176	5.65	4.41

The awarding of scholarships to disadvantaged families aims to assist parents in defraying the costs of boarding schools and day schools for their children. The number of beneficiaries of such scholarships was approximately 160,000 in 1996; it is currently 323,391, with 178,506 pupils in intermediate school and 144,885 in secondary school.

In addition, allowances are granted to needy pupils in technical secondary schools to enable them to buy technical equipment for classroom use. No fewer than 42,512 pupils receive such allowances.

The school solidarity enables all pupils to buy textbooks and school supplies by providing direct assistance to the most disadvantaged. Beginning in the 2000-2001 school year, a school subsidy was established in the amount of DA 2,000 for each enrolled child. By the beginning of the 2001-2002 school year, the programme was assisting 3 million children, requiring a budgetary allocation of DA 6 billion.

The Algerian educational system seeks to prepare future citizens; accordingly, it provides education in citizenship and teaches children national and universal values through such disciplines as history, Arabic and foreign languages, health, the environment, popular education, civic studies and religion, with a view to instilling in them healthy conduct and positive attitudes. In short, it teaches them life skills, starting in primary school.

Civic studies is a key discipline. Formerly called social education, it was taught from the third year of primary school. Since September 1997, it has been taught from the first year of primary school, and is integrated into the curriculum under the title of civic studies.

Laws governing the educational sector and school regulations prohibit the use of violence in educational institutions, in particular, corporal punishment of pupils. Ministerial bulletins are sent regularly to schools reminding them of those regulations and of the administrative penalties imposed on those who violate them.

The Ministry of Education has also set up a national commission which brings together representatives from various sectors, non-governmental children's organizations and parent associations in order to establish a culture of peace and to combat violence and other problems at school, such as drug and tobacco use. The commission has branches in all of the **wilayate**. A relevant national programme has been established and is being implemented in all schools.

An intersectoral programme has also been launched with the assistance of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to provide psychological treatment for children traumatized by terrorist violence; it includes awareness-raising and training for all professionals who work with children.

Schooling for children with special difficulties, such as disabled and hospitalized children, is provided by institutions within the education, health and social welfare sectors, and is regulated by inter-ministerial agreements defining the modalities of its provision and the mission, prerogatives and obligations of each sector.

Similarly children's health care is the joint responsibility of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Population, which have set up school health teams for all schools in the country, along with 1,114 screening and treatment units made up of school physicians, dental surgeons and psychologists who work directly within the schools.

7. Literacy

Literacy programmes are carried out in the various regions of the country in both urban and rural areas.

Change in the illiteracy rate (relative to the population aged 10 and over):

	%			
Sex year	*1966*	*1977*	*1987*	*1998*
Male	62.80	48.20	30.75	23.65
Female	85.40	74.30	56.56	40.27
Total	**74.60**	**58.10**	**43.82**	**31.90**

It seems clear that the illiteracy rate is dropping.

This problem particularly affects people aged 59 and over, 83.9 per cent of whom were illiterate in 1994, although the rate has diminished since 1992, when it stood at 87.92 per cent.

In 1990 a literacy programme for women and girls was launched by the National Adult Literacy and Education Office (ONAEA), with the support of UNICEF, in a number of **wilayate** and in both urban and rural areas.

This programme focuses on: the acquisition of basic skills (reading, writing and arithmetic); the dissemination of information on hygiene, health and household management; and job preparation. It has resulted in increased participation by rural inhabitants who have shown greater hesitation. Accordingly, the Office has extended its activities into almost all **wilayate**. This project was awarded a prize by UNESCO in Beijing in September 1995. It is currently being evaluated.

8. State support for literacy associations

1. Under ONAEA: programmes, teaching tools (manuals, guides) and teacher training;
2. Compensation for literacy teachers;
3. Provision of infrastructure (classrooms, etc.);
4. Subsidies.

It should be mentioned that for the past year, ONAEA has been restructuring, and local offices have been set up in 48 **wilayate**.

An exhaustive survey was conducted of all national and local non-governmental literacy organizations and all local initiatives with a view to coordinating and harmonizing literacy activities throughout the country for greater effectiveness and better results. The survey covered no fewer than 160 associations, which are now working closely with ONAEA.

9. Access by women to decision-making posts in the education sector

In 1999, this sector included:

1 female counsellor

1 female assistant principal

2 female central inspectors

3 female assistant directors

2 female directors of schools at the **wilaya** level.

In 2002, this same sector included:

2 female counsellors

2 female assistant principals

3 female central inspectors

4 female assistant directors

3 female directors of schools at the **wilaya** level.

10. Women in higher education

The presence of women in higher education has grown continually since the establishment of equal access to education following Algeria's independence. In the 2001-2002 academic year, 245,244 female students are enrolled in the country's universities. In the two previous years (1999-2000 and 2000-2001) the number of enrolments rose 14 per cent for boys and 17.6 per cent for girls. Girls' enrolment increased in the following disciplines:

Political science and computer science	75.6%
Pharmacy	41.5%
Common core	41.5%
Arabic literature	36.7%

For the 2000-2001, the number of enrolments nationwide in all university years was as follows:

	Men	*Women*
Medicine	31 286	17 486
Dentistry	33 520	2 028
Pharmacy	41 510	2 133
Veterinary medicine	4 197	1 582
Arabic literature	26 524	21 012
Foreign languages	27 026	19 095
Computer science	9 525	5 709
Social sciences	38 133	23 315
Law	72 878	42 497
Business and economics	87 752	44 183
Geology	7 810	3 602
Technology	75 759	26 936

Diplomas awarded in these disciplines nationwide in 1999-2000 were as follows:

	Men	*Women*
Medicine	1 974	1 062
Islamic studies	1 399	882
Arabic language and literature	3 349	2 709
Law	5 214	2 709
Dentistry	379	231
Pharmacy	316	197
Veterinary medicine	551	227
Technology		
All disciplines	7 189	2 218

Postgraduate degrees, all universities:

	Men	*Women*
Medical specialty	3 950	2 003
Ph.D.	6 280	1 852
All disciplines	12 303	4 920

Teaching corps, all disciplines, 2000-2001:

Professors (women and men)	1,126, of whom 234 were women
Senior lecturers	1,582, of whom 240 were women
Lecturers	7,971, of whom 1,646 were women
Assistant lecturers	6,073, of whom 2,184 were women
Teaching assistants	1,928, of whom 502 were women
Total:	17,780, of whom 4,806 were women

There are 113 women professors in the Faculty of Medicine and 31 in exact sciences. The other women teachers are distributed as follows:

Technology	1,141
Medicine	826
Exact sciences	821
Natural sciences	503
Social sciences	339
Faculty of law	267
Foreign languages	224
Economics	213

Geology	210
Literature	133
Veterinary medicine	54
Business	50
Information and communication	13
Political science	09

A total of 135,563 women are housed in university dormitories throughout Algeria (in 34 **wilayate**), as compared with 115,253 men.

Continuing education: 19,783 (total men and women)

11. Women in vocational training

(a) Evolution of training for women

Vocational training for women, although still insufficient, has been a constant concern of training directors.

During the first four-year plan (1970-1973), vocational training — whether initial, advanced or continuing — was defined as an essential factor preparing workers to hold a job. Training for women, however, has been confined to traditional sectors (sewing and secretarial work), both in the so-called comprehensive vocational training and apprenticeship centres (CFPA) and in the only two women's centres which have existed since 1967 (Birkhadem and Skikda Women's Centres).

During the second four-year plan (1973-1977) it was decided to establish a national vocational training system, with a unified design, diversified programmes, and decentralized management.

The promotion of training for women gained official recognition during International Women's Year in 1975, at which time the Ministry decided to establish six women's centres, in Annaba, Constantine, Tizi Ouzou, Tlemcen and Saida, each able to accommodate 250 trainees.

Vocational training for women has developed considerably in the past 10 years, with a tenfold increase in the number of women enrolled in the vocational training centres.

The number of women trained in 1971 (289) grew to 337 in 1981. That positive trend is due to the expansion of training facilities for women. There are two types of facilities: women's centres, and women's units and co-educational units in co-educational centres.

In 1968, only three women's centres existed; by 1981, the total number of women's centres had risen to nine. Those nine centres comprise 73 units and accommodate 1,696 women.

In 1980 the vocational training sector had 74 CFPA, with over 30,000 trainees, of whom 13 per cent were women. That percentage rose through the 1980s owing mostly to the enactment of the Apprenticeship Act and investment in infrastructure under the five-year plan (1985-1989).

The diversification of skills and the extension of training to students in the third year of secondary school has contributed significantly to the increase in the number of women in traditionally male fields, such as maintenance, audio-visual technology, graphic arts, computers, and agriculture.

In 1992 more than 30 per cent of residential trainees and 10 per cent of apprentices were women.

In 1995, there were 43 specific training centres for women, while co-education was extended to all the centres so that women would constitute 45 per cent of the enrolment. By 1996, women accounted for 51 per cent of the enrolment in residential training, 42 per cent in evening classes and 22 per cent in apprenticeship training.

In 1998 and 1999 women made up 51 per cent of the total enrolment. For the school year commencing in September 2001, the number of female trainees was 102,032 out of a total of 198,262, or 51 per cent.

These trainees are distributed among the 21 trades and professions listed by the vocational training sector.

Trade or profession	*Women trainees*	*Trainees*	*% Women*
Agriculture and fisheries	323	504	64
Commercial crafts and trades	15 331	16 583	92
Traditional crafts	9 611	13 264	72
Banking and insurance	401	668	60
Construction, public works, water engineering	2 062	16 549	12
Lumber and furniture	79	5 562	1.5
Chemicals/rubber/plastics	203	351	57
Mechanical engineering, steelmaking	64	3 318	2
Metallic construction	241	6 015	4
Hides and skins	14	737	1.8
Electrical and electronic trades	1 004	18 489	5.4
Clothing and tailoring	31 908	32 760	97
Hotels and tourism	725	1 787	40
Food-processing industries	163	348	46
Glass industries	0	19	0
Polygraph industries	204	809	25
Information technology	20 703	41 484	49
Textile machinery	74	312	23
Mechanics/engines/vehicles	219	8 086	2.7
Administration and management	18 611	30 301	61
Audio-visual and communication technology	92	317	29
Total	**102 032**	**198 262**	**51**

Although it is clear that women are concentrated in traditionally female occupations (clothing and tailoring, administration and management, commercial crafts and trades, etc.) there are female trainees in the fields generally regarded as masculine (construction and public works, plumbing, electrical and electronic trades, mechanics, etc.).

The trend towards specialized centres for women has faded, because trainees now opt for a particular trade regardless of the type of centre. With the spread of co-educational units, training for women has become more widely available, whereas it used to be concentrated in urban areas. This means that rural women play a role, albeit a modest one, in expanding the capacity of the training sector.

(b) Overseeing training

Training is overseen by 13,941 training and teaching management staff, of whom 35 per cent are women in office work, clothing and tailoring, commercial crafts and trades and, increasingly, information technology and management.

Women are relatively less involved in education management at the local level, and only to a limited extent in remote towns and rural areas. However, the training sector cannot develop smoothly without more women teachers in every field.

Article 11: Equality in labour and employment

1. Labour legislation

Algerian legislation has made special provision for the protection of women in the workforce, by means of Act 90-11 of 21 April 1990.

That Act also provides for wage and salary equality by stipulating that men and women shall receive equal pay for equal levels of qualification and performance. Act 90-11 reaffirms the basic rights of workers (the right to collective bargaining, social security, retirement, hygiene, safety and health in the workplace, rest time, the right to strike, etc.).

It also confirms the right to protection against any discrimination with respect to employment, other than that based on skills and merit (article 6).

Article 17 states: "Any provision within a collective convention or agreement or a labour contract that establishes discrimination of any kind with respect to work, on the basis of age, sex, social or matrimonial situation, family relationships, political conventions, union membership, is null and void". Such discrimination is subject to the penalties provided in articles 142 and 143 of the Act.

The 1990 labour law can be seen to have excluded any kind of dual approach in its definition of the status of working people. In addition, Act 90-11, while maintaining basic rights and safeguards, leaves the actual determination of the labour relationship to collective bargaining. It should be noted, moreover, that part-time work is legally organized.

2. Statistics on the employment of women

Women constitute half the population. According to the 1998 general population and housing census, the total population is 29,272,343, of whom 14,471,744 are women.

As at 30 September 2001, the National Statistical Office estimated the total labour force at 8,568,221, or 27 per cent of the total population (30 September 2001).

The percentage of women in the labour force was 15.21 per cent in September 2001.

The number of women in the labour force increased from 109,000 in 1966 to 1.26 million in September 2001, a twelvefold increase reflecting a rate of growth four times faster than that of the total labour force, which went from 2.56 million in 1966 to 8.6 million as at 30 September 2001.

(a) Share of women in the labour force

	Urban			*Rural*			*Total*		
Age bracket	*Total labour force*	*Female labour force*	*Female labour force as share of total labour force*	*Total labour force*	*Female labour force*	*Female labour force as share of total labour force*	*Total labour force*	*Female labour force*	*Female labour force as share of total labour force*
16-19	355 190	44 362	12.49	410 982	30 856	7.51	766 172	75 218	9.82
20-24	820 656	192 082	23.41	677 461	76 953	11.36	1 498 117	269 035	17.96
25-29	940 426	213 992	22.75	600 927	62 327	10.37	1 541 353	276 319	17.93
30-34	77 312	186.591	24.12	444 258	32 122	7.23	1 217 770	218 713	17.96
35-39	670 562	129 364	19.29	383 640	29 087	7.58	1 054 202	158 451	15.03
40-44	530 038	90 947	17.07	301 860	21 473	7.11	831 898	111 970	13.46
45-49	433 834	63 631	14.67	269 300	19 276	7.16	703 134	82 907	11.79
50-54	284 143	36 214	12.74	209 304	13 627	6.51	493 447	49 841	10.10
55-59	139 968	18 384	13.13	101 899	8 489	8.33	241 867	26 873	11.11
Total	**4 948 329**	**975 117**	**19.71**	**3 399 631**	**294 210**	**8.65**	**8 347 960**	**1 269 327**	**15.21**

As at 30 September 2001, the number of employed persons was around 6.2 million, nearly 60 per cent of whom lived in urban areas.

The number of employed women was around 883,549 in September 2001, as compared with 95,000 employed women in 1966.

(b) Distribution of employed women by age and stratum

Age bracket	*Category*		*Total*
	Urban	*Rural*	
15-19	19 585	18 737	38 322
20-24	67 449	41 013	108 462
25-29	123 381	42 475	165 856
30-34	134 026	25 506	159 532
35-39	112 085	27 809	139 894
40-44	80 982	20 935	101 917
45-49	59 182	19 276	78 458
50-54	33 117	13 010	46 127
55-59	17 733	8 489	26 222
60 +	8 810	9 949	18 759
Total	**656 350**	**227 199**	**883 549**

The number of employed women is 883,990, which represents 14.18 per cent of the total employed population.

4. Female unemployment

In September 2001 women job-seekers numbered approximately 409,540, representing 17.29 per cent of all job-seekers.

The number of unemployed women went from 15,000 in 1966 to 404,540 in 2001. The rapid rise in the unemployment rate among women is due to macroeconomic constraints which have caused a substantial drop in overall job creation.

Unemployed women are mostly young: three quarters (307,932) are under 30 years of age.

(a) Distribution of unemployed women, by age and category

Age bracket	*Category*		*Total*
	Urban	*Rural*	
Under 20	24 777	12 119	36 896
20-24	124 633	35 940	160 573
25-34	90 611	19 852	110 463
30-34	52 565	6 616	59 181
35-39	17 279	1 278	18 557
40-44	9 515	538	10 053
45-49	4 449	0	4 449
50-54	3 097	617	3 714
55-59	651	0	651
Total	**327 577**	**76 960**	**404 537**

Unemployment affects all strata of the female population; an examination of levels of education shows that one in four female job-seekers is a university graduate.

(b) Unemployed women, by level of education and category

Level of education	*Category*		*Total*
	Urban	*Rural*	
No education	4 548	4 402	8 950
Literate	1 277	922	2 199
Primary education	29 494	6 499	35 993
Intermediate education	87 571	21 366	108 937
Secondary education	115 933	24 070	140 003
Higher education	88 755	19 702	108 457
Total	**327 578**	**76 961**	**404 539**

A similar pattern is found among female job-seekers who have completed one training cycle:

Vocational training	*Category*		*Total*
	Urban	*Rural*	
Cycle completed	121 593	74 218	142 660
Cycle not completed	11 290	2 088	13 378
No training	194 695	53 806	248 501
Total	**327 578**	**76 961**	**404 539**

5. Characteristics of female employment

The statistics on female employment indicate that:

Employed women in Algeria are mostly young (over one third are under 30) and have a high level of education (48.6 per cent of employed women had completed the secondary level of education or a higher level in September 2001.

(a) Distribution of employed women by age and category

Age bracket	*Category*		*Total*
	Urban	*Rural*	
15-19	19 585	18 737	38 322
20-24	67 449	41 013	108 462
25-29	123 381	42 475	165 856
30-34	134 026	25 506	159 532
35-39	112 085	27 809	139 894
40-44	80 982	20 935	101 917
45-49	59 182	19 276	78 458

Age bracket	Category		
	Urban	*Rural*	*Total*
50-54	33 117	13 010	46 127
55-59	17 733	8 489	26 222
60+	8 810	9 949	18 759
Total	**656 350**	**227 199**	**883 549**

(b) Distribution of employed women, by education level and category

Education level	Category		
	Urban	*Rural*	*Total*
No education	77 640	93 426	171 066
Literate	7 912	6 017	13 929
Primary education	57 317	38 099	95 416
Intermediate education	132 108	41 423	173 531
Secondary education	211 055	34 574	245 628
Higher education	170 320	13 661	183 980
Total	**656 350**	**227 199**	**883 550**

Women are employed primarily in urban areas; in September 2001, the employment rate among urban women was 18.28 per cent, as compared with 8.61 per cent of rural women.

(c) Share of employed women workers by category

	Urban			*Rural*			*Total*		
	Total labour force	*Female labour force*	*Female labour force as share of total labour force*	*Total labour force*	*Female labour force*	*Female labour force as share of total labour force*	*Total labour force*	*Female labour force*	*Female labour force as share of total labour force*
16-19	143 972	19 585	13.60	228 759	18 737	8.19	372 731	38 322	10.28
20-24	386 128	67 449	17.47	424 031	41 013	9.67	810 159	108 462	13.39
25-29	562 222	123 381	21.95	400 147	42 475	10.61	962 369	165 856	17.23
30-34	581 326	134 026	23.06	355 554	255 006	7.17	936 880	159 532	17.03
35-39	573 651	112 085	19.54	324 656	27 809	8.57	898 307	139 894	15.57
40-44	467 887	80 982	17.31	270 725	20 935	7.73	738 612	101 917	13.80
45-49	392 372	59 182	15.08	238 099	19 276	8.10	630 471	78 458	12.44
50-54	252 861	33 117	13.10	182 422	13 010	7.13	435 283	46 127	10.60
55-59	132 567	17 733	13.38	91 131	8 489	9.32	223 698	26 222	11.72
60+	97 381	8 810	9.05	122 883	9 949	8.10	220 264	18 759	8.52
Total	**3 590 367**	**656 350**	**18.28**	**2 638 407**	**227 199**	**8.61**	**6 228 774**	**883 549**	**14.18**

A peculiar feature of female employment is its growth in non-market services (44.3 per cent) and industry (27.6 per cent); it is absent in construction and public works, and very low in commerce.

(d) Distribution of employed women by sector of activity and category

Sector of activity	*Category*		*Total*
	Urban	*Rural*	
Agriculture	28 468	81 833	110 301
Industry	175 346	68 899	244 245
Construction and public works	4 997	1 175	6 172
Commerce	24 636	2 646	27 282
Market services	84 254	20 104	104 358
Non-market services	338 649	52 542	391 191
Total	**656 351**	**227 200**	**883 551**

Women are employed in both the public and private sectors, but in urban areas they are more visible in the public sector, which employs 61.2 per cent of urban working women.

(e) Distribution of employed women workers by sector and category

Sector	*Category*		*Total*
	Urban	*Rural*	
Public	401 449	51 319	452 768
Private	252 181	173 911	426 092
Mixed	2 721	1 969	4 690
Total	**656 351**	**227 199**	**883 550**

Women in the informal sector work mainly in services, the crafts industry and in certain supporting activities. It is estimated that over 200,000 women work in the informal sector. Women who seek training tend to specialize in certain areas, such as education (48.4 per cent), public health (20.5 per cent) and public administration (25.4 per cent).

Despite an economic slowdown in recent years which triggered ever-widening imbalances between supply and demand in the job market, female employment increased between 2000 and 2001. As at 30 September 2001, the employed female population was on the order of 883,550, up from 697,683 in 2000.

Lastly, it should be noted that part-time work and work at home have been legally regulated since 1997, providing security for women who choose either of these options. Working at home is a viable alternative for those who cannot find a job outside the home (the unemployed) or those who are obliged to remain at home because of disability or household obligations.

Moreover, it should be pointed out that, despite the recessionary effects of joblessness and the economic crisis on female employment in recent years, female employment in Algeria from independence to the present has experienced net growth (883,550 working women as at 30 September 2001 compared to 95,000 in 1966). This increase in female employment has led to greater freedom for women and greater participation in national economic life.

In order to deal with unemployment and the recession, the authorities have taken fresh action to promote employment by elaborating and implementing a large number of measures to create income-generating activities. These State-supported alternative employment programmes have helped considerably to manage the labour market in recent years.

There is no discrimination or segregation among youth in job placement programmes. Young women and men have equal access to them.

6. Integration of women in job creation programmes

(a) Local Initiative Employees (commonly known as ESIL)

This is one of the most effective means of social and professional integration of job-seeking youth at the local level, particularly in deprived areas.

Extremely flexible in its operation, this type of programme is one of the best means of supporting the efforts of local authorities to maintain municipal facilities and improve living standards. This is a truly attractive recruitment system because it targets first-time and other underqualified job-seekers.

Female participation in this programme is relatively high, accounting, as at 31 December 2001, for 37.8 per cent of all Local Initiative Employees. The following table highlights the growing proportion of women in the ESIL programme:

Year	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*
Total number of participants (in thousands)	181.2	152.9	157.9	145.4	178.5
No. of female participants (in thousands)	54.2	53.2	64.6	56.8	67.5
Share of female participants (%)	29.9	34.8	41.0	39.1	37.8

(b) The microenterprise programme

The programme helps youth to start their own businesses through grants, subsidizing the interest on bank loans and other financial assistance. In addition to creating jobs in the vital maintenance and repair sectors, this programme is helping to rehabilitate many small artisanal trades and services which have a tendency to die out, and, in particular, to generate socially useful and economically stable jobs. It should be noted that, as at 30 September 2001, 3,792, or 10.047 per cent, of the 37,754 microenterprises financed have been conceived, launched and operated by women in a very wide range of areas, including electronics, public works and construction, transport and the food industry.

The table below shows the large proportion of women in this programme:

Sectors of activity	*No. of microenterprises financed*	*Women*	*Percentage of female microenterprises financed*
Transport (V)	11 665	393	3.37
Transport (M)	6 922	184	2.66
Services	6 596	1 582	23.83
Agriculture	4 620	189	4.09
Crafts industry	4 513	895	19.83
Industry	1 498	246	16.42
Construction, public works and hydraulics	847	32	3.78
Professions	663	256	37.63
Maintenance	351	15	3.45
Hydraulics	44	0	0
Fishing	35	0	0
Total	**37 754**	**3 792**	**10.04**

(c) The microcredit programme

As a placement programme and an effort to combat unemployment and poverty, the microcredit scheme set up in 1999 by the Social Development Agency and the banks, is designed to assist the unemployed who are able to create their own jobs but are not eligible for the microenterprise programme, either because of their age or for lack of financial resources.

The programme offers small loans ranging from DA 50,000 to DA 350,000 at a subsidized interest rate which are repayable and backed by a guarantee fund associated with the unemployment insurance fund.

Microcredit is an instrument suited to helping poor and unemployed persons to become the agents of their own social advancement and self-employment.

Aimed at promoting freelance work, working at home (15 per cent), and crafts and services, it covers productive and commercial activities, such as small-scale livestock breeding and beekeeping, agriculture, hydraulics, transport and fishing.

As at 31 December 2000, out of 10,140 certificates of eligibility, there were 3,350 women's projects, of which 35 per cent were distributed among services and productive activities.

(d) Pre-employment contracts

In an effort to integrate youth into the labour market in a period of economic slowdown, pre-employment contracts have been initiated for unemployed university graduates who are having tremendous difficulty integrating into the labour market because they lack the professional experience required. A pre-employment contract gives the beneficiary an opportunity to obtain practical training, to adapt to a job, and to receive a stipend paid by the State for a period of one year. It is also an opportunity to gain professional experience. It should be noted that this programme

enhances the opportunities for long-term placement after the pre-employment period, through initiatives aimed at employers.

There is a remarkable preponderance of women in this programme. Indeed, as at 1 June 2001, 78,927, or 65 per cent, of a total of 121,840 persons recruited were young women.

7. Protecting vulnerable demographic groups

The country's economic situation, particularly in the past decade, has led to the rather rapid development of poverty and exclusion-related phenomena.

Despite noteworthy and tangible achievements on the ground, women remain extremely vulnerable and do not have the same opportunities as men where it comes to credit, employment and housing.

As a result, the State's commitment to meeting the need for social services, particularly in the context of the struggle against inequality, should be noted. This policy is reflected in practice in the amounts allocated to social transfers, which represent an increasingly large share of government expenditure.

State social policy is implemented largely through these transfers. They can take the form of social assistance or community facilities for the underprivileged, tax exemptions for the lower-income brackets, or price supports for certain basic products and services.

To clarify further, what this means is that the amounts actually corresponding to expenditures financed from the State budget for the provision of income, supplementary income or social assistance to male and female citizens as disability compensation provide access to a good, a service or job- and income-generating activity.

As a general rule, the purpose of social transfers is to improve people's living conditions and to protect them from the risks related to job insecurity. Women rank high among those in need of material or other assistance.

To this end, government social action has been largely redirected towards policies that necessarily promote the social integration of population groups through an effective contribution to the development effort, including that of women struggling to overcome their economic dependence.

Thus, government assistance and solidarity programmes cover:

- the social safety net
- assistance to disabled persons
- assistance to the elderly
- assistance to children in need
- all other forms of social action (special national solidarity fund, interest-rate subsidies, pension differentials ...).

The current trend has been to highlight the importance of assistance and solidarity expenses, which represent 40 per cent of social transfers, a significant proportion of which are allocated to elderly women who are heads of household or live alone, disabled women over 18 years of age and those with incurable diseases.

Indeed, nearly one third of those who have no social insurance and are receiving sickness benefits (for medical expenses) are women.

Better management and greater effectiveness of all programmes in order to ensure their positive impact on human development, particularly that of women, nonetheless remains a priority.

Returning to statistics, the average number of women receiving social safety net benefits and allowances is 257,747, or 48 per cent of the total number (male and female), of whom 201,650, or 50 per cent, receive the standard solidarity allowance (AFS).

In the fourth quarter of 2000 alone, out of 537,603 beneficiaries (male and female), 163,664 were elderly women, 37,985 were disabled women, 108,667 were female heads of household and 150,816 were women who lived alone.

The vast majority of these women are between the ages of 25 and 51, accounting for two thirds of female beneficiaries.

The various regulations elaborated in this context highlight the need to devote special attention to the implementation of practical measures to eradicate the phenomenon of poverty, which affects these women in particular.

These measures include promotion of the organized women's association movement (850 national women's associations) within the context of support and assistance services, particularly with a view to identifying future beneficiaries.

In the category of disabled women, it should be noted that, of the overall number of disabled children and young adults under 25 years of age admitted for training in the specialized government institutions for various types of disabilities, one third are female.

Turning again to regulations, the recent promulgation of legislation on the protection and promotion of disabled persons will undoubtedly increase the visibility of disabled women and allow them to enjoy the benefits flowing from the legislation and, above all, equal opportunities in all areas of life.

8. Care of young children

The current period has witnessed an expansion of alternative forms of pre-school child care. This situation has encouraged women to contribute to development, particularly by participating in the economic recovery programme, which is a prime opportunity for their advancement.

Naturally, the extension of this arrangement into the private sector has enabled the children of housewives, who represent 75 per cent of the female population of working age, to attend pre-school.

This affords girls a greater opportunity to benefit from the pre-school experience.

The number of openings is still well below demand. An overhaul of the legislation governing the sector, including with regard to reforming the educational system is therefore in order.

Article 12: Equal access to health services

1. Women's access to health services: general information

The access of the population, including women, to health services is facilitated by the well-developed network of health infrastructures and the increase in medical and paramedical staff.

Thus, since the late 1990s, trends in the number of public health infrastructures have been as follows:

Year type of structure	*Hospitals*	*Polyclinics*	*Health centres*	*Sick bays*	*Maternity wards*
1997	223	465	1 144	3 601	530
2000	268*	497	1 252	3 964	616

* Including 13 university hospital centres and 31 specialist hospitals.

Medical and paramedical staffing has also been strengthened, as indicated in the table below, as has the number of female health workers.

2. Trends in medical and paramedical staffing between 1997 and 2000

	1997			*2000*		
Category of staff	*Total staff*	*Private sector*	*Percentage of women*	*Total staff*	*Private sector*	*Percentage of women*
Specialists	8 722	3 095	46	10 140	4 065	46.1
General practitioners	19 552	5 100	48.6	22 229	5 721	51.9
Pharmacists	4 022	3 604	65.4	4 814	4 587	65.6
Dental surgeons	7 966	2 764	64.4	8 197	3 346	66.8
Paramedics	85 296*	-	43	86 056**	-	44.5

* Including 5,453 midwives.
** Including 6,020 midwives.

This network density has resulted in the following changes in coverage:

Ratios/Year	*199-*	*2000*
Beds per 1,000 inhabitants	2	2
Gynaecology and maternity beds per 1,000 women of fertile age (15-49 years)	1.5	2
Inhabitants per polyclinic	62 365	60 563
Inhabitants per health centre	25 350	24 080
Inhabitants per sick bay	8 053	7 593
Inhabitants per dispensary pharmacy	6 152	5 777

Medical and paramedical staffing ratios have evolved as follows:

Ratios/Year	*199-*	*2000*
Inhabitants per physician	1 123	929
Inhabitants per dental surgeon	4 033	3 672
Inhabitants per pharmacist	7 818	6 252
Inhabitants per paramedic	363	351
Women of fertile age per midwife	916	750

The **EDG Algérie 2000** survey[1] showed that 68 per cent of the women surveyed reside less than five kilometres from a public health facility offering free maternal health services, and that 72 per cent reside less than five kilometres from an infant care facility.

Over the same period, the budget allocated to the health sector increased from DA 47,149 to DA 54,809. Health expenditure (including the health sector budget and contributions from other sectors such as social security, and household contributions) accounts for 3.6 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP), as compared with 4.6 per cent in the early 1990s.

Health expenditure has, however, increased in constant dinars from DA 26,555 million in 1991 to DA 35,253 in 2001. Proportionately, health expenditure has not increased at the same rate as GDP. Changes in the structure of health expenditure show an increased contribution from households owing both to the growth of the private sector and to the gradual introduction of a cost-recovery system. However, health care remains completely free of charge for the disadvantaged, with increased attention paid to that sector.

This system is part of the health reforms package for improved management of financial resources, with special emphasis on improved management of existing infrastructure and personnel. Given the large number of existing health facilities, it has been decided to limit investment in heavy infrastructure and invest further in small neighbourhood clinics. A redeployment of personnel is being carried out based on local need.

In the medium term, the structural reform process adopted by the Government in September 2000 is based on the following strategic themes:

- Improving the financial management system, including by overhauling the health information system and introducing cost accounting and an analysis of health costs;
- Diversifying funding sources and overhauling the cost recovery system;
- Updating the "health-care map", taking account of total health-sector capacity, including the parapublic and private sectors;
- Developing human resources;

[1] Survey of end-of-decade mother and child health goals, carried out in 2000 with support from UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO).

- Reviewing the Health Act adopted in 1985 and amended in 1990, and adapting it to reflect changing health needs and priorities, including in reproductive health.

Concerning demography, the results of the general population and housing census, carried out in June 1998 and published in 1999, provide further evidence of the demographic transition process initiated in the late 1980s.

The drop in the total fertility rate, estimated at 2.67, 2.44 and 3.02 children per woman nationwide and in urban and rural areas respectively, is particularly significant. The reduction in fertility is particularly evident in the younger age brackets, with 10.86 women per 1,000 having their first child before reaching 20 years of age (9.73 per 1,000 in urban areas and 12.34 per 1,000 in rural areas), as compared with 21 per 1,000 in ____ and 23 per 1,000 in 1990. Indeed, there has been a clear reduction in the average age at marriage, with women marrying on average at 27.6 years of age[2] and men at 31.3 years of age (compared to 23.7 and 27.6 years of age, respectively, in 1987). Thus, early marriage and motherhood now characterize a tiny minority in Algeria.[3]

Demographic change is also characterized by the gradual modification of the population structure by age, with a reduction in the proportion of younger people and an increase in the adult and elderly categories.

3. Change in population structure by age and sex during the last two censuses (in percentages)

	1987			*1998*		
Age group	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*
Under 20 years	55.52	54.51	55.02	48.73	47.79	48.27
20-59 years	38.89	39.59	39.23	44.93	45.35	45.14
60 years and over	5.59	5.90	5.74	6.34	6.86	6.59

4. Reproductive health

Reproductive health has been incorporated into the national health and population priorities. The reorganization of the Ministry of Health and Population in 2000 (Executive Decree No. 2000-150 of 18 June 2000) has facilitated the further integration of these concerns. Thus, under the new regulations, the Directorate of Population within the central administration of the Ministry of Health and Population is entrusted, through the subdirectorate of reproductive Health and Family Planning with:

"• Developing access to and improving the quality of reproductive health and family planning services;

• Studying and proposing relevant performance standards and criteria;

[2] The average age at marriage is estimated at 27.9 years for women in the main urban centre, 27.2 years in the next-largest urban centre and 26.8 years in more sparsely populated areas.

[3] Articles 12 and 16 of the Convention.

- Proposing measures to promote the use of and improve access to family planning services;
- Monitoring, regulating and assessing programmes for supplying contraceptives;
- Proposing relevant measures to improve the technical skills of staff in this area;
- Helping to design and implement other programmes related to reproductive health, such as screening for cancers of the reproductive organs, infertility treatment and reproductive health care throughout the life cycle."

Improved access to reproductive health care and family planning is in fact a key element of national population policy. Significantly, 2001 saw a readjustment of policy objectives and strategies for 2001-2010 prepared by the National Population Committee. This strategy paper was considered and adopted at the highest level by the Council of Ministers. Consideration of this issue reaffirmed the commitment of the central authorities to making national population policy a human development priority.

In this connection, the following objectives up to the year 2010 have been identified:

- Continue to reduce population growth by promoting family planning;
- Mainstream contraceptive use by 2010 and achieve 70 per cent coverage by supporting the use of modern methods;
- Continue to reduce maternal and infant mortality, with a view to achieving a 50 per cent reduction as compared with the 1999 rates.

These aims and priorities have been identified in the light of trends revealed by population and health surveys and of various assessments of progress and constraints encountered in programme implementation.

A. Family planning

(a) Trends in contraceptive use

Contraceptive use increased significantly in the 1990s. The **EDG Algérie 2000** survey showed an all-methods use rate of 64 per cent, as compared with 56.9 per cent in 1995.

Use of family planning is on the increase irrespective of place of residence. From 1995 to 2000 use of contraceptives increased from 57.2 per cent to 64.8 per cent in urban areas and from 56.6 per cent to 62.9 per cent in rural areas. The pill is still the most widely used contraceptive (44.3 per cent in 2000), followed by the intrauterine device (IUD) (4.3 per cent). Condom use is on the increase (1.5 per cent in 2000 as compared with 0.8 per cent in 1995), while 13.9 per cent of contraceptive users resort to natural methods, such as prolonged breastfeeding.

Contraceptive use is now more continuous, with average use increasing from 31.5 months in 1995 to 34.4 months in 2000, reflecting better fertility control among contraceptive users.

Women increasingly make use of family planning regardless of age. However, contraceptive use among younger women increased from 1995 to 2000, as shown in the table below. The contraceptive use rate is over 70 per cent among women from 30 to 39 years of age, generally the most fertile age group.

(b) Trends in contraceptive use by age (in percentages)

Year/Age	*15-19*	*20-24*	*25-29*	*30-34*	*35-39*	*40-44*	*45-49*	*Total*
1995	43.5	52.3	62.4	63.8	63.1	53.8	33.5	56.9
2000	57.6	60.5	69.3	72.8	71.2	62.3	38.6	64

The above data show a rapid increase in family planning in Algerian society. The main reasons for not using contraceptives are "desire to have a child" and fear of medical side-effects, both of which confirm the policy option of continuing to improve information, and awareness-raising on reproductive health issues. Stated opposition to family planning is very low (0.2 per cent of non-users in 2000).

B. National programme priorities

In view of these developments, the programmes of action which are being implemented focus on the following areas:

- Enhancing the quality of services, by adjusting the standards with respect to the delivery of reproductive health and family planning services and disseminating those technical guidelines broadly at all levels of the health-care system. Special emphasis is placed on the most disadvantaged **wilayate**, those with the poorest results. Assistance is provided in such areas as purchasing equipment, upgrading technical capacity and recruiting staff, including medical specialists, within the framework of the civil service.

- Upgrading the technical skills of service providers through further training. In this connection, four national courses, targeting agents at different levels, have been developed; they cover programme management, reproductive health and family planning techniques, information, education and local communication, and utilization of demographic data.

- Regulating the supply of contraceptives, which, it should be recalled, are provided free of charge in public health facilities and are 100 per cent reimbursable in private-sector facilities for persons covered by social insurance. Among the measures taken in this area, mention should be made of the doubling, in 2001, of the budget allocated for the purchase of contraceptives in order to cover the increase in demand.

- Enhancing information and awareness-raising with respect to family planning and birth control issues targeting different categories of the population (couples, men and women living in rural areas, young people), as well as health workers, with a view to increasing their motivation and involvement in the programme.

- Strengthening studies and operational research; in this connection, it should be noted that the theme of "reproductive health" was identified as one of the priorities of the national research programme on health for 2002. The theme is

subdivided as follows: family planning, maternal and perinatal health, infertility, and sexually transmitted diseases. In addition, mention should be made of the national survey on family health, to be conducted in 2002 with the support of various agencies of the United Nations system and within the framework of the Pan Arab Project for Family Health (PAPFAM), the study protocol of the Arab League. This survey should provide information on women's health at all stages of life (childhood, youth, childbearing, ages 50 to 60, old age).

5. Maternal health

Given the current number of births and the care indicators, the improvement of maternal health is an integral part of the reproductive health priorities. In fact, despite the significant reduction of demographic growth, which made it possible to achieve a natural population growth rate of 1.43 per cent in 2000 (as compared with 1.46 per cent in 1999 and 1.89 per cent in 1995) and a birth rate of 19.76 per 1,000 (as against 20.21 per 1,000 in 1999 and 25.33 per 1,000 in 1995), the annual number of births in 2000 was 600,000 (as against 605,000 in 1999 and 771,000 in 1995).

The indicators regarding the provision of maternity care reveal tangible progress, but there remains room for improvement, particularly in some regions of the country.

Thus, the prenatal care coverage was estimated at 79 per cent (81 per cent in urban areas and 76 per cent in rural areas) in 2000, as compared with 57.3 per cent in 1992. Prenatal care includes anti-tetanus vaccinations for pregnant women, estimated at 55 per cent of the women concerned in 2000, as against 50 per cent in 1996 (59.1 per cent in urban areas and 48.7 per cent in rural areas). Childbirth is assisted in 92 per cent of cases, in accordance with the **EDG Algérie 2000** survey, and takes place in the home in 8 per cent of cases (as against 22 per cent in 1992). The proportion of deliveries in the home is higher in rural areas (12 per cent) and in the southern part of the country (16 per cent). Postnatal care was received by 32 per cent of the women concerned in 2000, as compared with 20 per cent in 1992. Despite the progress made, postnatal care remains inadequate, and strengthening it is part of the safe motherhood programme being implemented at the national level.

Despite the improvements in the care provided during pregnancy and delivery, as revealed by the indicators cited above, maternal mortality remains a concern for the authorities. The national survey conducted in 1999 in every commune in Algeria produced a maternal mortality ratio of 117 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. It should be recalled that in 1989 the maternal mortality ratio was put at 230 per 100,000, the figure having been reduced by half in a decade. The 1999 survey revealed, inter alia, significant disparities between the regions; the maternal mortality ratio, which is estimated at 84 per 100,000 in the centre-north region, is 210 per 100,000 in the south-eastern part of the country. The ratio varies from 17 to 235 per 100,000 in the various **wilayate**.

The most frequent risk factors highlighted in the survey are the woman's age (19 per cent of the women who died were 40 years of age and over, and 45 per cent were 35 years of age and over), the number of births (47 per cent of the women who died had four or more children) and insufficient prenatal monitoring (35.1 per cent of the women who died had not had a single prenatal consultation). The most frequent causes of death are the "traditional" ones, namely, haemorrhages, infections

and arterial hypertension; it should be noted that only 5.5 per cent of reported deaths were linked to abortion.

This survey provided useful elements for strengthening the national programme to combat maternal and perinatal mortality. The priorities identified are as follows:

- Enhancing prenatal care and routinely providing at least four consultations during pregnancy; prenatal care includes vaccination against neonatal tetanus and prevention of nutritional deficiencies (mention should be made of the reduction of severe anaemia, the incidence of which was estimated at 15 per cent in 1999);
- Improving the quality of service provided through further training for general practitioners and midwives, notably in identifying high-risk pregnancies; increasing the length of hospitalization and widely disseminating the relevant technical guidelines;
- Enhancing the referral system at the various levels of maternity care and strengthening emergency obstetrical services;
- Reinforcing the links between the various programmes focusing on the health of the mother and child (family planning, maternal breastfeeding), particularly in the context of postnatal care.

6. Other areas of reproductive health

(a) Programme to combat sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and AIDS

STDs and AIDS are receiving close attention in the context of prevention activities. The AIDS pandemic has afflicted Algeria since 1985, when the first case appeared. As at 31 December 2001, 527 cases had been diagnosed. The number of persons infected with HIV in the same period is estimated at 1,125. The proportion of women in the total AIDS-infected population was 28.5 per cent in 2001, as compared with 25 per cent in 1998; women, particularly those of childbearing age, are thus increasingly at risk for the disease.

Cumulative distribution of AIDS cases by age group and sex, 1985 to the end of 2001

Age Sex	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*
0-14 years	13	7	20
15-19 years	3	1	4
20-49 years	306	111	417
50 years and over	34	14	48
Not specified	21	17	38
Total	**377**	**150**	**527**

As at 31 December 2001, the most frequent modes of transmission of the disease are as follows:

Heterosexual relations: 204 cases;

Drug addiction:	92 cases;
Blood transfusions:	48 cases;
Homosexual relations:	36 cases;
Mother-to-child transmission:	10 cases;
Undetermined:	135 cases.

The number of cases of infection through blood transfusions has stabilized as a result of controls effected at the national level. In contrast, the number of cases of heterosexual transmission is increasing, which militates in favour of stepping up information and communication activities.

Since 1999, programme implementation has led to improvements in the following areas:

- In the field of patient care, mention should be made of the expansion of triple therapy, which was introduced in March 1998 at the Centre for the Treatment of HIV Infection in Algiers and is provided entirely at the State's expense. The number of regional centres specializing in the treatment of HIV infection increased from four in 1999 to six. A centre was opened in the far south (in Tamanrasset), owing to the high incidence of HIV infection in this region of the country (10 times higher than the national incidence), coupled with a heavy flow of migration, including from sub-Saharan Africa. The introduction of generic drugs in 2002 should lead to a significant reduction in the cost of treatment and, consequently, an increase in the number of patients receiving it.
- Intensifying information, education and awareness-raising activities, particularly among young people and the school-age population, with the participation of the ministries concerned and community organizations.
- Strengthening epidemiological surveillance through the planning and implementation of a national sero-monitoring survey in 2000.

The main areas of focus for the period 2002-2006 are as follows:

- Strengthening epidemiological surveillance: it has been decided to conduct regular sero-monitoring surveys, as well as a survey in 2002 on HIV prevalence among persons infected with tuberculosis;
- Improving the quality of medical care for at-risk groups and infected persons;
- Improving training and information so as to prevent the transmission of STDs and AIDS, including strengthening the role of associations in this area;
- Enhancing the legal and regulatory framework in this area with a view to strengthening the National Reference Laboratory and establishing regional laboratories and anonymous testing centres.

(b) Testing for genital cancers

This area of reproductive health was strengthened in 2001, notably by enhancing cervical cancer testing. A national strategy of systematic testing for cervical cancer, which is one of the most common genital cancers with an incidence of 11 per 100,000 women, has been developed; this strategy encompasses both testing, done at the primary level in local reproductive health facilities, and referral.

About 100 local facilities were equipped to perform cytodiagnosis and provided with the necessary reagents and consumables. This strategy, implemented in the first phase in about 20 of the country's 48 **wilayate**, will be extended to the whole country by 2003; it incorporates training in cytodiagnosis for the staff of the health-care facilities concerned. This initiative has received support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in the context of the cooperation programme for 1998-2001.

(c) Fertility treatment

The year 2001 saw the definition of the regulatory framework for medically assisted procreation. The organizational framework for this activity, in both the public and private sectors, was thus mapped out; standards for the quality of services to be provided in this area and the modalities for evaluation and monitoring were defined with due regard also for issues of morality and professional ethics.

(d) Addressing violence against women in health programmes

Violence, particularly against women and children, is an integral part of health concerns. Actions in this area include:

- Enhancing studies with a view to better defining the scale of the phenomenon. In this connection, the **EDG Algérie 2000** survey included a module on injuries linked to violence suffered by women and children, whether accidental or deliberate; the results revealed an incidence of injuries of 32 per 1,000 among children under 15 years of age (42 per 1,000 for boys and 18 per 1,000 for girls) and 18 per 1,000 among women of childbearing age (15-49).
- Developing psychological counselling initiatives, focusing, in particular, on child victims of violence; such initiatives have been supported through training programmes for medical personnel.
- Broadening the dialogue between health workers and workers in the other sectors concerned (justice, police); mention should be made in this regard of the international seminar on violence against women organized by the National Institute of Public Health in October 2001, which led to the adoption of a platform for action in this area.

7. Women's health at various stages of life

(a) Girls

Girls' health is, of course, covered by preventive health programmes, including the national programme to combat child mortality. The child mortality rate has decreased more rapidly since the late 1990s, falling from 53.8 per thousand in 1999 to 51.1 per thousand in 2000 (54.2 and 47.8 per thousand for boys and girls, respectively). One cause of this decrease is the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI): in 2000, 93 per cent of all children were vaccinated with bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) (93 per cent in 1995); 89 per cent received all three doses of diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus (DPT) and polio (83 per cent in 1995); and 83 per cent received the measles vaccine (77 per cent in 1995), without

discrimination as to sex.[4] The nutritional status of children under 5 has also improved: the percentage of severely delayed growth (weight/age) fell from 7 per cent in 1995 to 0.6 per cent in 2000 (0.6 per cent and 0.5 per cent for boys and girls, respectively) and that of moderately delayed growth from 11 per cent in 1995 to 2.8 per cent in 2000 (3.1 per cent and 2.4 per cent for boys and girls, respectively).

There are four child health prevention programmes designed to reduce the incidence of the most common ailments among children under five.[5]

The decrease in exogenous causes of child mortality as a result of the reduced incidence of diseases controllable through immunization has made neonatal mortality (death during the first month of life) an increasingly significant factor; it currently accounts for 60 per cent of all deaths among children.

(b) Young people

Continuing attention is paid to the health of adolescents and young adults through, inter alia, school and university health programmes. Since the late 1990s, the network of screening and monitoring offices in the State school system has been expanded to a total of 1,121 in 2001; 80 preventive medicine offices have been established in the nation's 30 university towns. These offices are staffed by multidisciplinary teams (doctors, nurses, dentists and psychologists). Their purpose is to screen for all childhood and adolescent ailments, carry out health education programmes and promote healthy behaviour among children and adolescents by combating smoking, drug addiction, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Since 2001, consideration has been given to incorporating reproductive health issues into the school and university health programmes. An ongoing study, scheduled for completion in January 2002, is evaluating young people's needs in that area and these issues will be incorporated into the activities of the screening and monitoring offices and the preventive medicine offices by 2002.

These offices' activities in the field of reproductive health complement the population education activities carried out within the school system; in 2001, a teacher's reference book and teaching manual, which includes units on reproductive health was introduced in the intermediate schools.

Information and education programmes for young people, including programmes designed to combat STDs and AIDS and to promote healthy reproductive behaviour, also involve counselling, distribution of pamphlets and other materials and hotlines provided by "health offices" in the youth centres.

Gender perspective projects are also being carried out. One such project, implemented jointly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) since 1999, will develop a national strategy for development programmes, including health programmes, involving various ministries and institutions; in 2000, another project involving four national organizations was launched in order to train volunteers in the gender perspective and to develop information and counselling services for women in the areas of reproductive health, women's rights and the law.

[4] Between 1997 and 2000, the incidence of measles fell from 62.48 to 5.30 per 100,000 and the incidence of neonatal tetanus from 19 to 12 per 100,000.

[5] These are the EPI, programmes to combat diarrhoeal and respiratory diseases among children and the nutrition programme.

(c) Older women's health

Algerian demographics are changing; the population is ageing. The percentage of older persons in the general population rose from 5.7 per cent to 6.6 per cent between 1987 and 1998 (the dates of the two most recent surveys) and population projections suggest that declining birth rates and increased life expectancy will more than double their number from 2.010 million in 2000 to 4.410 million (11 per cent of the general population) during the next quarter-century, by 2025. Women outlive men worldwide; older women account for 52 per cent of persons aged 60 and over. The care of older persons has therefore been included among Algeria's health and population objectives; in particular, prevention programmes for age-related ailments (cardiovascular disease, diabetes and osteoporosis) will be developed. In the area of reproductive health, menopause-related concerns have been incorporated into the continuing education programmes for doctors and midwives and an Algerian Menopause Organization has been established in order to educate the general population, train service providers and carry out research and programmes on menopause.

8. Common diseases and health programmes

Water-borne diseases and zoonoses remain areas of public health concern; however, the overall incidence of such ailments is falling[6] with no significant difference between the sexes.

Among contagious diseases, combating tuberculosis is also a priority. The incidence of this disease was an estimated 60.7 per 100,000 in 2000, a slight increase over 1997 (57.3 per 100,000) which is attributable in part to improved diagnosis. Pulmonary tuberculosis is more common among men (59.6 per cent of all cases) whereas women are more often infected with extra-pulmonary tuberculosis (55.6 per cent of all cases). A strategic plan for renewed efforts to combat tuberculosis during the period 2001-2005 is being implemented; one of its goals is to bring the incidence of this disease to less than 50 per 100,000 by the end of that period.

Mental health is another health priority. A national mental health programme, adopted in October 2001, involves the following key activities:

- Provision of mental health care with a focus on decentralized primary health care, a community-based approach and the availability of medications; "intermediate mental health care centres" will be established in the various health-care districts;
- Prevention programmes for mental and neurological illness will be developed;
- Psychological and social rehabilitation programmes for persons suffering the effects of violence will be implemented;
- Staff training and public information programmes will be strengthened; and

[6] With regard to water-borne diseases, no cases of cholera have been recorded since 1996. Between 1997 and 2000, the incidence of typhoid fell from 16.3 to 9.28 per 100,000 and that of viral hepatitis from 14.32 to 8.94 per 100,000. With regard to zoonoses, the incidence of brucellosis rose slightly — from 11.57 to 13.01 per 100,000 — whereas that of leishmaniasis fell from 34.44 to 14.72 per 100,000 during the same period.

- Research will be carried out and existing legislation adapted to the new system.

9. Health in the workplace

About 20 per cent of workers have access to health care in the workplace; this coverage must be expanded through increased involvement of employers. About 600,000 men and women workers are covered through hospital and university health centres or district health clinics; 500,000 workers are covered through medical centres in the companies which employ them. There are currently 450 specialists and 300 general practitioners in the field of industrial medicine; thus, coverage in this area will be expanded.

Article 13: Social services and recreational activities

1. Social security

The social security system covers women, working women and women dependants of workers.

Benefits include health insurance, coverage for work-related accidents and 14 weeks' maternity leave with payment of their full taxable income after deduction of social security and income tax. Pregnant workers also receive non-cash benefits consisting of full coverage of medical and pharmaceutical expenses and of birth-related hospital fees.

Non-working women whose husbands are social security contributors are entitled to maternity insurance in the form of non-cash benefits.

Like men, women are entitled to disability benefits if they are no longer able to work as a result of a disability and to death benefits.

2. Retirement

The legal retirement age is 60; however, working women may take voluntary retirement at age 55.

The widows of social security contributors are entitled to survivors' benefits, whatever their age, as are the daughters of deceased contributors who are unmarried and have no other source of income.

These provisions guarantee an income to non-wage earning women.

In the area of family benefits, employees are entitled to family allowances for their minor children; retired workers also receive a pension supplement for their dependent spouses.

Women workers laid off as a result of economic downsizing are entitled to unemployment benefits until they are rehired.

New legislation, in force since 1997, gives women the right to voluntary retirement with a proportionally reduced pension if they are at least 45 years old and have made pension contributions for at least 15 years.

As part of its educational mission, the Algerian school system sponsors cultural activities and sports both within the school curriculum, which makes

physical education and the arts (including drawing and music) specific subjects that are compulsory, graded and reflected in the entry examinations for all students (both girls and boys), and in the schools' activity programmes (in areas such as sports, music, singing, dance, drawing, theatre and handicrafts) and scientific and cultural clubs (in areas such as health, astronomy, computer science, the environment and poetry).

Reading is also encouraged in Algerian schools through the creation of primary and secondary school libraries.

Naturally, these activities are open to all students without discrimination of any kind.

Reform of the educational system (Recommendations of the Committee)

A national commission for reform of the educational system, composed of men and women university professors, teachers, researchers, school inspectors, principals, psychologists, sociologists and other specialists, was established by the President of the Republic and instructed to develop proposals for a comprehensive, in-depth reform of the entire educational system. In April 2001, after 10 months' work, it submitted a report which the Government is currently considering with a view to its implementation.

The Ministry of Education has already created mechanisms in preparation for the enactment of this reform.

To that end, a National Curriculum Committee composed of specialists from the schools and universities has been established. This Committee includes women members, particularly in the Specialized Subject Groups responsible for curriculum development; some of these Groups are chaired by women.

A National Textbook Approval Committee has also been established as part of the process of opening textbook production and sales to the private sector, which has already entered the field of extracurricular textbooks publication.

Textbooks are reviewed regularly in order to bring them in line with various programme changes of recent years.

Once the new curricula have been approved, new textbooks will be prepared as part of the future comprehensive reform.

Article 14: Rural women

1. General situation of rural women

The review period (1999-2002) has not been long enough to bring about significant changes in the situation of rural women. However, work done by women has become more visible, particularly in the areas most affected by the rural exodus and rapidly increasing urbanization. While men have gravitated towards the towns, women have remained in the country, taken full responsibility for their families and become, by necessity, genuine heads of household. Their work has allowed life to go on in the countryside.

Despite the fact that, for the above-mentioned reasons, the number of rural women has dropped from 49 per cent in 1987 to 41 per cent (General Population and Housing Census, 1998), the female rural population remains significant.

There are now 2,102,760 persons engaged in agriculture, and 15 per cent of them are women.

2. Promoting rural women: action taken

Since 2000, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has had a strategy and a plan of action to mainstream gender into development. Those measures are currently being implemented.

Progress has been made in implementing the principal elements of the strategy as follows:

(a) Creation of a database and gender-disaggregated statistics available to all development partners

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development took account of gender mainstreaming in the last agriculture census (2002) by including questions requesting information about women.

The provisional results of the census show that there are:

95,721 female farmers

293,527 permanent female employees

41,793 female heads of household

(b) Institutionalization of gender-based development

Institutionalizing gender-based development involves the introduction of organizational, training and retraining instruments. It is reinforced at the national and **wilaya** level by the establishment of bodies (units or offices for rural women) responsible for rural women's issues.

In May 2001, the National Agricultural Extension Institute set up a unit for rural women which deals with:

- Developing the extension approach to include rural women;
- Organizing study and discussion workshops on the integration problems and experiences of rural women in the area of rural and agricultural development;
- Devising a training and development programme for female experts;
- Canvassing and conducting socio-economic surveys and studies on rural women;
- Implementing extension and technical support programmes for female farmers.

In addition, a number of training and development programmes have been organized by the National Agricultural Extension Institute, in the framework of cooperation projects or by other bodies in the sector:

Fifty female experts have received training on the gender-based approach;

Sixty female experts have received training in the area of communication and rural coordination;

Sixty female extension workers have received training in reproductive health.

A permanent extension course has been set up: around 40 young women have been trained in extension activities.

Likewise, the Minister of State for the Family and the Status of Women has launched a work and research programme in collaboration with the Rural Women's Unit affiliated to the Agricultural Extension Institute with a view to generalizing the process of integrating the work done by rural women into the national economy.

(c) Enhancing a social and cultural environment conducive to gender-based local development

This approach relates to the restoration and/or creation of basic infrastructures which are necessary for community life, the reduction of illiteracy rates and the implementation of an information mechanism for communities.

Several actions have been taken by the association movement in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, including convening of regional informational and awareness-raising meetings for rural women on subjects of interest to them (health, education, regulations governing domestic work, State financial aid for female farmers and so on).

With regard to restoration, action is currently being taken by associations in partnership with the European Community and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (for example, in the village of Bordj T'har in the **wilaya** of Jijel). Women are the main beneficiaries of this action.

(d) Enhanced consideration of women in sectoral development programmes and projects

The integration of women is taking place at various levels:

- In the programme for land development through granting land;
- In the steppes development programme;
- In the agricultural systems restoration programme;
- And in the forests programme.

Ever-increasing numbers of women are taking part in these programmes. Broadening the activities of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development provides an opportunity to strengthen the promotion of the role of rural women within the framework of integrated development.

Thus, when designing development projects aimed at the most isolated and underprivileged communities, the principle of gender mainstreaming is essential. To that end, a methodological guide for rural facilitators is currently being drafted.

(e) Rural women's health

Data from the various health surveys and other sources of statistical information (in particular the Recensement general de la population et de l'habitat)

shows that disparities between rural and urban areas regarding access to health care and services are becoming blurred.

Thus, in 2000, 5 points' difference between rural and urban areas in the field of prenatal care was recorded (as compared to 22 points in 1992, with a prenatal care rate of 69.9 per cent in urban areas as compared to 47.4 per cent in rural areas) and only 2 points' difference with respect to access to family planning. In contrast, no difference was recorded as regards child vaccination. In the case of family planning, the disparity is more pronounced from region to region, particularly between the north and the south of the country. Therefore, although since 1995 the contraceptive use rate has increased from 48 per cent to 51.5 per cent in the south of the country, the disparity is still significant in comparison to the national average.

This analysis has led to a reduction in and the eventual elimination of the disparities between residential strata and regions being identified as a priority of health and population policy. This would be achieved through, inter alia, decentralizing programmes and introducing grass-roots action in remote and/or disadvantaged areas.

Attention is drawn, in particular, to the revitalization of the activities of the mobile teams through the provision of all-terrain vehicles and the implementation of a communications network. Similarly, a development programme targeting the south is under way, which incorporates health considerations through, inter alia, the improved distribution of human and material resources in order to ensure a minimum package of curative and preventive care and the strengthening of health programmes targeting specific diseases (trachoma, bilharziasis, scorpion poisoning and so on).

In the area of family planning, a specific project targeting men and women from rural areas has been in place since 1999, operated in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture. Informational and awareness-raising activities concerning, inter alia, contraception, maternal and infant health, nutrition and hygiene are carried out by specially trained agricultural extension workers. This project has received support from the United Nations Population Fund.

Article 15: Equality in legal and civil matters

The principle of gender equality is guaranteed by the Constitution, article 29 of which provides that "citizens shall be equal before the law, without any discrimination due to birth, race, sex, opinion, or any other personal or social condition or circumstance".

Likewise, article 31, which defines the mandates of the institutions, provides that their "aim [...] shall be to ensure equality of rights and duties for all citizens (male and female) by removing the obstacles which hinder the progress of human beings and impede the effective participation of all in the political, economic, social and cultural life".

Article 51 states that "equal access to functions and positions in the State shall be guaranteed to all citizens without any other conditions except those defined by the law". Lastly, article 55 provides that "all citizens shall have the right to work".

Those provisions all show that women are subjects of civil, criminal, administrative and commercial law. The principle of gender equality is incorporated into the codes governing those areas, thereby enabling women to enjoy the same rights as men, even as regards the conclusion of all forms of contracts, including commercial ones. Women also have full legal capacity to acquire property and to manage, enjoy and dispose of it.

Moreover, the legislative and regulatory texts governing employment not only enshrine the equality of men and women before the law but also contain specific provisions to benefit women. However, they still do not provide for de facto equality as regards access to specific positions.

In the 1970s, employment legislation guaranteed the right to work for all and equality of workers regardless of gender and age by stipulating, inter alia, that they "shall enjoy equal wages and benefits for equal work provided that they are equally qualified and productive".

Specific protection measures for women in the areas of maternity and family responsibilities have also been incorporated into employment legislation.

Lastly, the principle of freedom of movement and freedom to choose places of residence and domicile is enshrined in article 44 of the Algerian Constitution, which provides that any citizen enjoying his civil and political rights shall have the right to choose freely his place of residence and to move within the national territory.

That article also provides that the right of entry to and exit from national territory shall be guaranteed. It applies universally to men and women without any form of discrimination.

Although there have at times been some restrictions on the freedom of movement applicable to both men and women, that right can now be fully exercised both within national territory and on trips abroad. Women, whether alone or accompanied by their families, are now able to travel to any destination for private or professional purposes.

Article 16: Equality of rights within the family

Family law is governed by Act No. 84-11 of 9 June 1984, entitled the Family Code. This legal text, based on the Constitution which states, inter alia, that "Islam is the religion of the State", lays down the rules governing the formation and the functioning of the family, which is defined as the "basic unit of society". In particular, it sets out the conditions of the conjugal relationship, motherhood and inheritance.

With regard to the conjugal relationship, marriage is defined as a contract which is drawn up and recorded in written form at a registry office. This procedure replaces the traditional oral agreement. The legal age of marriage has been raised and now stands at 18 years for women and 21 years for men. The consent of both partners is a fundamental and essential element of the marriage.

Today, most couples meet outside the traditional spheres. A family approached with a marriage request will consent only if the daughter so wishes. Article 36 sets out a number of reciprocal rights and responsibilities within the institution of

marriage, including "the maintenance of conjugal relations and marital responsibilities".

With regard to property, pursuant to article 38, women have full responsibility for their own income and "ha[ve] the right to full freedom in the disposition of [their] property".

Divorce may only be declared by a court ruling, thereby preventing all forms of unilateral verbal reneging by the husband. In accordance with the provisions of article 48, divorce may occur at the will of the husband, the wife or by mutual consent.

Article 87 of the Family Code also allows the woman, after the death of her husband, to exercise guardianship over her children. This is an important step forward, in light of the conservative insistence of tradition and social custom that guardianship is the prerogative of the male line.

Equality of the personal rights of the two spouses is respected by the law, and this extends to the choice of family name, profession or occupation. There is no provision that restricts the exercise of these rights by women. The same is true for the property rights of the spouses, with reference to which article 38 of the Family Code provides that "the wife has the right to full freedom in the disposition of her property".

The Commercial Code establishes no discrimination between male and female merchants. These two codes provide that the woman enjoys full use of her property, and that she may dispose of it freely without the consent of her husband.

Right to family planning

The right to family planning is enshrined in health legislation which has been in force since 1985. That principle is reaffirmed within the framework of the national population strategy for the year 2010, which was adopted by the Council of Ministers in December 2001. The basic principles underlying the implementation of the national population policy take into consideration that:

- "The right to reproductive health information and services is an integral part of the constitutional right to health. Free reproductive health care and services are guaranteed for disadvantaged citizens;
- Access to family planning is based on the principle of voluntary participation and personal choice. No form of coercion may be used in the prescription of contraceptive or birth control methods."

Informational, educational and awareness-raising activities are an integral part of the priorities of the national population strategy, which aims to enhance the adoption of healthy and responsible reproductive behaviour, including among the younger generation. Behaviour in this area is clearly evolving. A survey of 2,500 male and female adolescents conducted in late 1999 showed that 95 per cent thought that it was difficult to provide all the children in large families with a good education; 84 per cent thought that families should play a part in population regulation through family planning; 44.5 per cent wanted to have children and 65 per cent wanted a maximum of three children (70 per cent of the girls and 60 per cent of the boys).